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René Rast shows nerves of steel to win at the Norisring

- **BMW driver celebrates his first win of the season after staying out on slicks in the rain**
- **Franck Perera and Luca Engstler join him on the podium with the same tactic**
- **Kelvin van der Linde defends his lead in the championship**

Nuremberg. Nerves of steel and a flawless performance – René Rast claimed his first win of the season on Saturday at the street circuit in Nuremberg. The BMW driver from Schubert Motorsport refused to allow the sudden onset of rain to knock him out of his stride, staying out on slicks and going on to take the chequered flag after 69 laps of racing. The win at the Norisring saw the three-time DTM champion return to the top step of the podium after four podiums in the past two years. “For me, the Norisring is one of the best tracks on the calendar. This win feels huge. It got a bit loud on the radio, because I was determined to stay on slicks, despite the rain. That was a brave decision, but it paid dividends,” said the experienced German. The Rast strategy also paid off for Franck Perera (F) from Lamborghini Team TGI by GRT and his team-mate Luca Engstler (Kempton), who came home second and third at the end of an eventful race.

Key facts, Norisring, race 7 of 16

- **Length:** 2,162 metres
- **Weather:** 29 degrees, bright at first, rain later
- **Pole position:** Jack Aitken (Emil Frey Racing, Ferrari 296 GT3 #14), 48.965 seconds
- **Winner:** René Rast (Schubert Motorsport, BMW M4 GT3 #33)
- **Fastest lap:** Maximilian Paul (Paul Motorsport, Lamborghini Huracán GT3 Evo2 #71) 49.632 seconds

Saturday’s race at the Norisring began in glorious sunshine with a good start from pole-sitter Jack Aitken (GB) from Emil Frey Racing in a Ferrari 296 GT3. Sheldon van der Linde (ZA/Schubert Motorsport), Lamborghini driver Mirko Bortolotti (I), Maro Engel (Monaco) in a Mercedes-AMG GT3, and Rast slotted in behind him in second to fifth place. With rain expected, the leading drivers came in very late for their mandatory pit stops, in order to be able to react to a possible change in the weather. Despite this, almost all the drivers remained on the Pirelli slicks. However, Aitken lost two positions to Sheldon van der Linde and Bortolotti. Rast followed in fourth place, with championship leader Kelvin van der Linde (ZA) running fifth at the time in an Audi R8 LMS GT3 Evo2 for Abt Sportsline. Shortly thereafter, the rain started to fall and almost the entire field switched to wet weather tyres.

Rast, still on slicks, took the lead ahead of Perera, who had also decided against wet tyres despite the track being wet in places. That strategy really paid dividends. As the race progressed, those on wets were not able to make up any significant ground and actually ended up being slower in the closing stages. Engstler was a beneficiary of this. The Lamborghini driver had started the race from 15th on the

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grid and battled his way into third place on slicks in the final few laps. Fourth place went to Nicki Thiim (DK), who overtook his team-mate Bortolotti in the final corner.

Kelvin van der Linde came home sixth. That was enough to see the South African defend his lead in the overall standings, ahead of Bortolotti and Rast. His brother Sheldon finished seventh in the second Schubert Motorsport BMW. Engel ended the seventh DTM race of the season in eighth place, while Aitken had to settle for ninth after leading for long stretches. Lamborghini driver Maximilian Paul (Dresden/Paul Motorsport) was tenth.

Franck Perera: “The closing stages of the race, in particular, were incredibly intense. On the one hand, I was closing in on René Rast all the time. On the other hand, I wanted to make sure of second place. In conditions like that, something can happen at any time. Fortunately, it only rained heavily in turn one. Slicks were the right choice.”

Luca Engstler: “After a collision at the start, the first half of the race was so bad that I actually wanted to park the car and retire. When the first drops started to fall, I knew I would be able to make some progress. In the end, we made the right decisions and the team finished with two cars on the podium.”

Result, race 7 of the season, Norisring

1. René Rast (D/Schubert Motorsport)
2. Franck Perera (F/Lamborghini Team TGI by GRT), +2.272 seconds
3. Luca Engstler (D/Lamborghini Team Liqui Moly by GRT), +37.075 seconds
4. Nicki Thiim (DK/SSR Performance), +44.111 seconds
5. Mirko Bortolotti (I/SSR Performance), +44.479 seconds

The full result is available at dtm.com/en/results.

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