

Media Information

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Kelvin van der Linde back on top of the DTM after dominating in the rain

- **Audi driver triumphs in Saturday's DTM race at the Nürburgring**
- **Runner-up Mirko Bortolotti trails the South African by one point**
- **Wet race in the Eifel thrills fans with many changes of position**

Nürburg. That was a textbook wet race from Kelvin van der Linde (ZA). The Audi driver from Abt Sportsline was in a different class to the rest of the field in Saturday's ninth race of the DTM season at the Nürburgring. The South African took the chequered flag with a lead of over 15 seconds to claim his second win of the season and return to the top of the table. "Winning the race and taking the lead in the championship is awesome. The rain was heavy at times, less so at others. In these unsettled conditions, finding the right braking points all the time was a big challenge. However, despite the rain, I felt really comfortable in the car from lap one," said 28-year-old van der Linde. Second place went to Mirko Bortolotti (I) in an SSR Performance Lamborghini. Having come into the race as the championship leader, he now trails van der Linde by just one point. Maro Engel (Monaco) from Mercedes-AMG Team Winward occupied the third spot on the podium.

Key facts, Nürburgring, Nürburg, race 9 of 16

- **Circuit length:** 3,629 metres
- **Weather:** 19 degrees, rain
- **Pole position:** Kelvin van der Linde (Abt Sportsline, Audi R8 LMS GT3 Evo2 #3), 1:25.350 minutes
- **Winner:** Kelvin van der Linde (Abt Sportsline, Audi R8 LMS GT3 Evo2 #3)
- **Fastest lap:** Kelvin van der Linde (Abt Sportsline, Audi R8 LMS GT3 Evo2 #3), 1:38.011 minutes

The ninth DTM race of the season started behind the safety car as the rain fell over the Nürburgring. Pole-sitter Kelvin van der Linde immediately pulled clear of the field in his Audi R8 LMS GT3 Evo2, before consistently extending his lead. Behind him, Lamborghini works driver Bortolotti had all on to defend second place against the charging Engel in a Mercedes-AMG GT3. He was followed in fourth place by fellow Mercedes-AMG driver Lucas Auer (A), ahead of Nicki Thiim (DK) from SSR Performance.

After the round of mandatory pit stops, during which all the drivers again fit Pirelli wet-weather tyres as the rain continued to fall, the top four cars maintained their positions. Out in front, van der Linde continued to dominate and pull away from the rest of the field. He produced the fastest lap of the race shortly before the finish, before taking the chequered flag after 37 laps of racing, ahead of Bortolotti, Engel and Auer. Jack Aitken (GB) from Emil Frey Racing ended the wet race in the Eifel in fifth place in a Ferrari 296 GT3.

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In the pack behind the front-runners, the DTM drivers thrilled spectators and fans with some fierce wheel-to-wheel racing and plenty of battles for position. Marco Wittmann (Fürth) from Schubert Motorsport once again showed plenty of fighting spirit, climbing five places to finish sixth in his BMW M4 GT3. The same could be said for Porsche works driver Thomas Preining (A) from Manthey EMA. The defending champion made up no fewer than eight positions at his team's home event, impressing in the second half of the race with spectacular overtaking manoeuvres on his way to a seventh-place finish. Thiim was unlucky. He lost a lot of ground following contact with Ayhan Güven (TR) and eventually crossed the finish line eighth. Ricardo Feller (CH) had to settle for ninth place after a strong start in the second Abt Sportsline Audi. Arjun Maini (IND) from Mercedes-AMG Team HRT completed the top ten.

Mirko Bortolotti: "Difficult race, super result. That sums up Saturday from my perspective. Kelvin van der Linde was on a totally different level, and I was unable to match his pace. Before the start, I would immediately have settled for second place, given the difficult conditions. As such, I am very happy."

Maro Engel: "It always feels great to be on the podium in the DTM. I tried everything to put Mirko Bortolotti under pressure. Hopefully we can take another step forward on Sunday. Kelvin van der Linde's times show that we still have potential."

Result of race nine of the season at the Nürburgring

1. Kelvin van der Linde (ZA/Abt Sportsline)
2. Mirko Bortolotti (I/SSR Performance), +15.232 seconds
3. Maro Engel (D/Mercedes-AMG Team Winward), +16.377 seconds
4. Lucas Auer (A/Mercedes-AMG Team Mann-Filter), +28.491 seconds
5. Jack Aitken (GB/Emil Frey Racing), +30.474 seconds

The full result can be found at dtm.com/en/results.

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