

7.9.2024

Excellent Aitken wins, Bortolotti new DTM leader

- **Aitken claims his third win of the season at the Sachsenring, ahead of new leader Bortolotti**
- **Engel comes home third to make it four podiums in a row**
- **Fightback of the day: René Rast storms through to seventh place from last on the grid**

Hohenstein-Ernstthal. An impressive and serene display from Jack Aitken (GB): the Ferrari driver from the Emil Frey Racing team claimed a comfortable lights-to-flag victory in Saturday's eleventh race of the 2024 DTM at the Sachsenring. Aitken thus took his place on the top step of the podium for the third time this season. "I could feel the pressure from Mirko Bortolotti at the start and immediately after the tyre change. However, I drove a flawless race, so I was never seriously in danger. I was still a little nervous during the pit stop, when the wheel nut jammed on the front tyre. That can happen sometimes in high temperatures," said the 28-year-old. Mirko Bortolotti (I) was runner-up for SSR Performance, crossing the finish line 1.878 seconds behind the winner in a Lamborghini Huracán GT3 Evo2. That was good enough for the Italian to reclaim top spot in the table ahead of Kelvin van der Linde (ZA), who was eighth in an Audi R8 LMS GT3 Evo2 run by Abt Sportsline. Third place went to Maro Engel (Monaco) in a Mercedes-AMG GT3, who again demonstrated his consistency as he claimed his fourth podium in a row.

Key facts, Sachsenring, Hohenstein-Ernstthal, race 11 of 16

- **Circuit length:** 3,645 metres
- **Weather:** 30 degrees, sunny
- **Pole position:** Jack Aitken (Emil Frey Racing, Ferrari 296 GT3 #14), 1:17.288 minutes
- **Winner:** Jack Aitken (Emil Frey Racing, Ferrari 296 GT3 #14)
- **Fastest lap:** Thierry Vermeulen (Emil Frey Racing, Ferrari 296 GT3 #69), 1:19.500 minutes

Starting from pole position, Aitken immediately took the lead at the start and consistently extended his advantage over the course of the race. Bortolotti slotted into second place, while Engel made up two positions and climbed into third. He was followed in third and fourth place by fellow Mercedes-AMG drivers Luca Stolz (Brachbach) and Arjun Maini (IND) from Mercedes-AMG Team HRT. After the mandatory pit stops, the top five found themselves in the same positions, although Aitken did lose a little of his lead due to a somewhat slower tyre change. Despite this, the Brit controlled the pace at the front and took the chequered flag after 46 laps of racing.

The battle of the day was between Kelvin van der Linde, who came into the race as championship leader, and Porsche driver Thomas Preining (A), who went fastest in qualifying but was relegated five places on the grid after receiving a penalty. Van der Linde had made his way from tenth to sixth, overtaking Preining in the process. However, the reigning champion stayed in touch and launched a sequence of attacks. On lap 34, the Austrian from the Manthey EMA team finally pulled off a skilful manoeuvre to pass van der Linde and take sixth place. René Rast (Bregenz), who had been demoted to

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the back of the grid in his BMW M4 GT3, was also able to overtake the South African and ended the race in seventh place after an incredible fightback. Kelvin van der Linde managed to hang onto eighth place ahead of his brother Sheldon van der Linde (ZA/Schubert Motorsport). Jordan Pepper, making his DTM debut for Lamborghini Team TGI by GRT, completed the top ten.

Mirko Bortolotti: “I would have liked to have challenged for the win, but Jack Aitken was in a league of his own today. It was important to look after the tyres in this heat. Second place puts me back at the top of the table. It could not have gone better for us, thanks in part to a super pit stop.”

Maro Engel: “The race was a lot of fun. I was able to gain a position at the start and then take third place shortly after. That is my fourth DTM podium in a row, so things are going really well at the moment. We want to continue this way.”

Result of race eleven of the season at the Sachsenring

1. Jack Aitken (GB/Emil Frey Racing)
2. Mirko Bortolotti (I/SSR Performance), +1.878 seconds
3. Maro Engel (D/Mercedes-AMG Team Winward), +3.174 seconds
4. Luca Stolz (D/Mercedes-AMG Team HRT), +4.717 seconds
5. Arjun Maini (IND/Mercedes-AMG Team HRT), +10.843 seconds

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

Media Contact

ADAC e.V.

Oliver Runschke, T +49 89 76 76 69 65, E-mail oliver.runschke@adac.de

Kay-Oliver Langendorff, T +49 89 76 76 69 36, E-mail kay.langendorff@adac.de

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