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DTM – Stars and Stories from the Sachsenring

- **Olympic champion Lars Riedel visits the iconic circuit in Hohenstein-Ernstthal**
- **Bundesliga stars send the DTM field onto the track**
- **Golden boy Thorsten Margis swaps bobsleigh for Race Taxi**

Leipzig's midfielder playmaker Schlager sends field into action

Xaver Schlager, who plays his football at Bundesliga outfit RB Leipzig, was a guest of Schaeffler and Abt Sportsline at the DTM in Saxony, and gave the racers the instruction "Drivers start your engines" ahead of Saturday's race. The 26-year-old was impressed by the atmosphere at the Sachsenring. "In football, you are in the zone and focussed before kick-off. Here on the grid, the drivers are relaxed shortly before the race and have contact with the fans. That is great. I am in my element here," said Schlager. As an Austrian, he obviously had his fingers crossed for his compatriots. "We have always had good racing drivers and now have the reigning DTM champion in Thomas Preining. I wish Lucas Auer all the best for the rest of his career after his 150th DTM race. That is something very special."

Discus icon Lars Riedel presents trophy

Lars Riedel sent the field onto the 3.645-kilometre track at the Sachsenring for race twelve of the season on Sunday. He also presented the trophy to third-placed Maro Engel on Saturday. He knows as well as anyone how to perform at and win championships: the discus thrower won gold in Atlanta in 1996, and followed that with silver in Sydney four years later. The man from Zwickau, who was visiting round six of the DTM as a guest of Abt Sportsline, has also been world champion on five occasions, European champion once, and has set multiple world records. The sheer size of the two-metre giant prevented him from being able to go for a lap in the Schaeffler DTM Innovation Taxi, a 640-hp Audi R8 LMS GT2. "I have driven in the Sachsen Classic a few times. I would love to take a DTM car out for a spin too sometime," said Riedel.

Footballer Arnold keeps his fingers crossed for Engstler and has a dream

Star guest, Bundesliga professional Maximilian Arnold, has been to the DTM a few times – and the VfL Wolfsburg player visited his friend Luca Engstler from Lamborghini Team Liqui Moly by GRT at the Sachsenring. Arnold also made an appearance on the podium, presenting Mirko Bortolotti with his trophy for second place. The 30-year-old enjoyed the "special atmosphere at the circuit" and revealed his big dream. "I would really love to take my place in a race car, drive it on the track, and explore my passion for motorsport," said the German international, who has three caps to his name.

Robert Förstemann at the Sachsenring after winning Olympic bronze

Robert Förstemann arrived at the Sachsenring as a newly-crowned bronze medal winner at the weekend. Together with the visually-impaired Thomas Ulbricht, the track cycling world champion finished third in the 1,000 metres time trial on a tandem, and he was still buzzing from

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the Olympics. “We pulverised the German record with a time of less than a minute in Paris. Taking third place really gave me goosebumps. The DTM is an affair of the heart for me, particularly here at the Sachsenring. I grew up just round the corner and am always impressed by this unique DTM flair.”

Olympic champion Thorsten Margis swaps bobsleigh for Taxi

Bob star Thorsten Margis’ great passion is speed. The former track athlete won gold in the two-man and four-man bobsleigh as a pusher in Pyeongchang in 2018 and Beijing in 2022. He is also a multiple world and European champion. He got to know the Sachsenring particularly well on his ride in the Race Taxi. “The acceleration is different to in a bob – everything is a bit smoother and not so rough in a race car. And you can check out your surroundings during the ride, which is not possible as a pusher in a bobsleigh. I have driven a lot in the simulator. However, it would be awesome if I could actually have a go at driving a GT3 car sometime,” said Margis.

Milestone: 150 DTM races for Lucas Auer

Lucas Auer is one of the most experienced drivers in the DTM field. The Austrian joined the series in 2015 and claimed his maiden victory at the Dekra Lausitzring one year later. A further eight wins were to follow, and the Mercedes-AMG driver finished runner-up in the championship in 2022. On Saturday, Auer contested his 150th DTM race at the Sachsenring and cast his mind back to the very start. The milestone: “I crashed in my first DTM race and immediately thought: that was it. It feels incredible that I have now made it to 150 races.”

Luge youngsters impressed by speed

Jannes Degenhardt and Silas Sartor start for RRC Altenberg in the Junior B and Youth A classes. This weekend, the next generation of luge stars visited the Sachsenring for the second time, having previously done so in 2023. Jannes Degenhardt: “We are fast, but it is nothing compared to the DTM cars. However, they have brakes, with which to control the speed when necessary.”

Cockpit instead of microphone: Matthias Killing lines up in the NXT Gen Cup

Matthias Killing brings the DTM to living rooms everywhere. The presenter for TV partner ProSieben entertains fans every race weekend with driver interviews and information from the paddock. At the Sachsenring, Killing, who possesses a racing licence, swapped his microphone for a steering wheel and joined the field in the fully-electric NXT Gen Cup. “You look pretty slow,” joked Kelvin van der Linde, as he and Killing viewed the onboard footage together.

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