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Title race in the mountains: Eight drivers set sights on the DTM summit

- **Kelvin van der Linde arrives in Spielberg as championship leader ahead of penultimate event**
- **Austrian trio, including defending champion Thomas Preining, looking forward to home outing**
- **Packed programme, with four series, eight races and the DTM Track Safari**

Munich. The pursuit of the 2024 DTM title guarantees a dramatic climax to the season. Round seven of eight takes the touring car series to the Red Bull Ring in Austria this weekend (27th to 29th September). When the action unfolds in Spielberg, it will determine who is still in contention at the finale in Hockenheim, and who is best-placed to be crowned champion. Ahead of the second foreign event of the year, Kelvin van der Linde (ZA) in an Audi holds a slender lead over Italy's Mirko Bortolotti in a Lamborghini and top Mercedes-AMG driver Maro Engel (Monaco). Can one of the trio pull clear, or will other drivers climb into the leading group in the mountain scenery of Styria? The chasing quartet features some big names, including defending champion and local favourite Thomas Preining in a Porsche. Six different manufacturers in the top six positions in the table, as well as nine different winners in twelve races so far, are evidence that there are no clear favourites at the Red Bull Ring. ProSieben will broadcast the DTM live on German free-to-air TV, with coverage starting at 13:00 on Saturday and Sunday. The races can also be seen live online at Joyn, ran.de, and on the YouTube channel @DTM.

Key facts, Red Bull Ring, Spielberg, races 13 and 14 of 16

- **Circuit length:** 4,318 metres
- **Layout:** Ten corners (seven right, three left), driven clockwise
- **2023 winner, race 1:** Kelvin van der Linde (Abt Sportsline, Audi R8 LMS GT3 Evo2)
- **2023 winner, race 2:** René Rast (Schubert Motorsport, BMW M4 GT3)

Leading trio: Who will blink first?

In the last three events, the lead in the table has changed hands on four occasions – van der Linde and Bortolotti have traded blows freely. Coming into the Spielberg weekend, van der Linde holds a seven-point lead. "It is a very special battle, which is pushing both Mirko Bortolotti and me to the next level. We try to get the maximum out of our package every weekend. When it works, it gives you a very special feeling," says the Audi driver, who tasted victory at the Red Bull Ring last year. For Bortolotti, it will be vital to take full advantage of his qualifying strength. The 34-year-old has virtually perfected the art of producing top performances when up against the clock: Bortolotti has started from the front row of the grid in his Lamborghini Huracán GT3 Evo2 no fewer than six times this year. Engel, 15 points behind van der Linde in third place, has also been consistently strong. The experienced racer is the only driver to have recorded six podiums this year, and has picked up 83 points from the last five races.

Chasing pack: Who can take it to the next level?

It is also a close affair behind the top three: just six points separate fourth-placed Jack Aitken (GB/Emil Frey Racing) in a Ferrari from Luca Stolz (Brachbach/Mercedes-AMG Team HRT) in eighth in his Mercedes-AMG. Aitken claimed his third win of the season at the Sachsenring – more than any other driver. Lurking

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in the slipstream of the former Formula 1 driver is Porsche works driver Preining, who is looking to benefit from home advantage. "I really enjoy driving at the Red Bull Ring. It is really good for overtaking and the races are always fun," says the man currently fifth in the table. A BMW duo behind Preining is also planning an assault on the top of the table: trailing championship leader van der Linde by 55 and 56 points respectively, this is the final chance for former champions Sheldon van der Linde (ZA) and Austrian resident René Rast (Bregenz) from Schubert Motorsport to keep their title aspirations alive.

Three Austrians at Spielberg spectacle

Nestled in the idyllic mountain scenery of Styria, the Red Bull Ring boasts a unique backdrop. Top speed is initially vital on three straights at the fastest circuit on the DTM calendar. After that, the cars race downhill through a series of fast corners. The unique topography means there are large undulations, and ensures fans get a great view of the action from the grandstands. "For me, it is the most attractive circuit with the best fans. I like the middle sector with the fast corners best. They are what make the Red Bull Ring so special," says Clemens Schmid of the 4.318-kilometre Formula 1 track. Completing the DTM trio from Austria, alongside the McLaren driver from Steinach am Brenner and Preining from Linz, is Lucas Auer (Mercedes-AMG Team Mann-Filter) from Kufstein in a Mercedes-AMG. GRT Grasser-Racing-Team, which is based near the circuit in Knittelfeld, fields two Lamborghini in front of its home fans.

Packed programme with four series and the Track Safari

Fans in Spielberg for the DTM weekend can look forward to four series and eight races. The ADAC GT Masters is in Austria for its third foreign outing of the year. ADAC GT4 Germany will also line up at the racetrack to the northwest of Graz. Plus, the Porsche Sixt Carrera Cup Deutschland also promises to put on an action-packed show with more than 12,000 PS. The DTM Track Safari is an exclusive experience: on Friday, fans can discover the Red Bull Ring from a totally new perspective, when they take to the track in buses at the same time as the DTM cars. Tickets for the DTM weekend in Spielberg start at € 39 and are available online at dtm.com. Admission is free for under 16s when accompanied by an adult.

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