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Three-way title race in Hockenheim: Who will be DTM champion?

- **Mirko Bortolotti has his sights set on the first DTM title for Lamborghini**
- **Kelvin van der Linde could crown a benchmark season for Abt Sportsline**
- **Maro Engel is dreaming of a first title in his eighth year in the DTM**

Munich. Three drivers, three teams, one goal: to win the 2024 DTM title. From 18th to 20th October, the Hockenheimring Baden-Württemberg is the venue for the final showdown for the DTM trophy. Mirko Bortolotti (I) from SSR Performance comes into the decisive final race weekend as championship leader and slight favourite in his Lamborghini Huracán GT3 Evo2. His closest rival is Audi driver Kelvin van der Linde (ZA) from Abt Sportsline, who trails the Italian by just 15 points. Third-placed Maro Engel (Monaco) could also clinch the title with a strong display at the finale – the driver from Mercedes-AMG Team Winward is just 20 points behind Bortolotti. With a maximum 56 points still up for grabs in Hockenheim, it promises to be a thrilling conclusion to the season. Tickets for the DTM finale start at € 39 and are available online at [dtm.com](https://www.dtm.com). Admission is free for under 16s when accompanied by an adult.

Bortolotti produces top performances under pressure

With 204 points to his name, Bortolotti is the only one of the three title contenders with his fate in his own hands. The Italian overcame a difficult start to the season and hit top form coming into the all-important closing stages. Bortolotti enjoyed his most successful DTM race weekend of the year at the Red Bull Ring, where his first win of the season returned him to the top of the table. 34-year-old Bortolotti has proven to be ice cold in qualifying, regularly turning in top performances when up against the clock. This year, he has started seven DTM races from the front row of the grid. Furthermore, the Vienna resident knows exactly what awaits him in Hockenheim. Bortolotti has arrived at the finale as a title contender in each of the past two seasons. “I am looking forward to the battle in Hockenheim. When it comes to the way you approach the weekend, it doesn’t make a big difference whether you are the hunted or the hunter. Whatever happens, you cannot afford to make any mistakes,” says Bortolotti, adding optimistically: “We consistently perform well as a team. That is not a given in the DTM and gives me a lot of confidence.”

Van der Linde impresses with ability to counter

As a two-time winner of the ADAC Ravenol 24h Nürburgring, Kelvin van der Linde is one of the best GT3 drivers in the world. However, a DTM title is still missing from the South African’s trophy collection. Van der Linde has led the championship for more time than any other driver this season. Three times Bortolotti has leapfrogged ahead of him at the top of the table, and twice he has held his nerve and hit straight back. The 28-year-old must now counter successfully for the third time in Hockenheim, if he is to be crowned champion. The title would be the perfect way for his team Abt Sportsline to end a benchmark year. The team from Kempten is contesting its 25th season in the DTM. Van der Linde’s latest display of fighting spirit came in Spielberg, where he climbed a total of 15 places over the course of the two races. “I like driving in Hockenheim. I have actually always been successful

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there. There is still everything to play for and I am highly motivated,” says a combative van der Linde, who claimed the first of his two titles in the ADAC GT Masters in Hockenheim ten years ago. He has amassed 189 points in this year’s DTM and is the only one of the title contenders with two race victories to his name.

Engel calls on all his experience

Engel has been a picture of consistency this year. The Monaco resident may still be waiting for his second win of the season, but he has already featured on the podium on seven occasions – more than any other driver. In fact, Engel has guided his Mercedes-AMG GT3 to a top-three finish in five of the last seven races. The experienced German is in fine form coming into the finale in Hockenheim. Out on the track, Engel has called upon the full wealth of experience amassed from 106 DTM appearances over eight seasons: in Oschersleben, he fought his way through from tenth on the grid to finish second. At the Dekra Lausitzring, he made up a remarkable eleven positions to finish runner-up. The Mercedes-AMG driver is a clever tactician and can rely on his impressive pit crew. The Winward team has performed the fastest tyre change on Engel’s car in three races this season. “When you travel to the finale with a chance of winning the title, it means you have had a good season. We may be in the role of the underdog, but we believe in our chances and will give it everything,” says Engel.

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