

## Media Information

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### Fastest in practice – clear statement from Bortolotti in DTM title race

- **Championship leader opens DTM finale at the Hockenheimring with the day's top lap**
- **Defending champion Thomas Preining is second fastest behind the Italian**
- **Kelvin van der Linde, second in the table, ends practice sessions in 14<sup>th</sup> place**

Hockenheim. Mirko Bortolotti (I) continues to apply pressure in the title race. The championship leader was the fastest driver when the final DTM round of the season kicked off on Friday, and looks in great shape coming into the final showdown in Hockenheim. The Lamborghini works driver from SSR Performance set the fastest time of the day (1:38.184 minutes) in the afternoon's second practice session. "We are ideally prepared for the weekend, even if Friday is not so significant in the DTM. After this morning's rain, it was important to be able to do a few laps on a dry track in the second session," said the Vienna resident after his impressive display. Thomas Preining (A) from Manthey EMA was second fastest in his Porsche 911 GT3 R, 0.221 seconds slower than Bortolotti. Preining's team-mate Ayhancan Güven (TR) was third. Nicki Thiim (DK) steered the SSR Performance team's second Lamborghini Huracán GT3 Evo2 to fourth place. Rounding out the top five was Thierry Vermeulen (NL) from Emil Frey Racing in a Ferrari 296 GT3.

Free practice 2 took place on Friday afternoon with temperatures around 15 degrees Celsius and a virtually dry track, and was significantly faster than in the wet conditions that greeted the drivers in the first session at the iconic 4.574-kilometre circuit. Despite this, the teams started cautiously and, with mixed conditions at the start of the session, each sent one driver out on slicks and their team-mate on wet-weather tyres. However, after just a few laps all the drivers switched to the Pirelli slicks and the pursuit of fast lap times began. René Rast (Bregenz) from Schubert Motorsport was the first to crack the 1:40-minute barrier in a BMW M4 GT3. Shortly after, Vermeulen moved to the top of the timings sheet with a 1:38.989-minute lap. Just a few moments later, Preining bettered that time by more than half a second, and looked set to end the day as the fastest driver. However, Bortolotti ultimately set the fastest time on his 18<sup>th</sup> lap. Kelvin van der Linde (ZA), who currently lies second in the championship, had to settle for 14<sup>th</sup> place in an Audi R8 LMS GT3 Evo2 run by Abt Sportsline. However, he remained upbeat. "The conditions were very mixed today. With this in mind, I don't think you can really read too much into the results of practice. We want to win both races. The most important thing is for me to finish ahead of Mirko Bortolotti twice." The third-placed man in the table, Maro Engel (Monaco) from Mercedes-AMG Team Winward, was only a little faster in 13<sup>th</sup> place.

Light rain fell during FP1 on Friday morning, making it a wet session, which was won by Porsche driver Güven with a time of 1:48.728 minutes. "It always feels great to start the race weekend with a fastest time. We have seen several times already this season that wet conditions suit us. Plus, I actually enjoy driving in the rain," revealed the 26-year-old Turk.

The first qualifying at the Hockenheimring gets underway at 09:30 on Saturday. Fans can follow the session via a livestream at ran.de. ProSieben is showing all 16 of this season's races live on free-to-air TV, with coverage starting half an hour before the start of the races on Saturday and Sunday. The DTM races are broadcast live or replayed in full in over 150 territories.

## Media Information

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