

## Media Information

20.10.2024

### Mirko Bortolotti – the 2024 DTM champion in profile

- **Italian claims first DTM title for Lamborghini, SSR Performance and himself**

Munich. A lifelong dream come true for Mirko Bortolotti: the Lamborghini factory driver clinched the DTM title for the first time in his career at the season finale in Hockenheim. „This is the best day of my life. Ten years ago Lamborghini gave me an opportunity, and since then they have always believed in me. I still remember losing the title race last season, when I shed some tears. That makes winning the championship all the sweeter,” said an overjoyed Bortolotti after the presentation ceremony. The Italian’s brilliant performance also earned luxury brand Lamborghini from Sant’Agata Bolognese its first champion’s trophy in the 40-year history of the DTM. Bortolotti’s team SSR Performance also notched up another milestone – the title is the team from Munich’s biggest success since its championship-winning season in the 2020 ADAC GT Masters.

With his DTM triumph, Bortolotti has proven emphatically that he refuses to allow setbacks to get him down, and always remains focussed on achieving his goals. This quality can be traced back to his childhood. At the tender age of five, Bortolotti, who was born in Trient on Lake Garda and grew up in Vienna, already knew that he wanted to be a racing driver. “As a young boy, I visited the Bologna Motor Show and saw the Alfa Romeo, which Giancarlo Fisichella drove in the DTM – and immediately fell in love with motorsport. After that, I started to race karts, although nobody in my family had any connection to motorsport,” says the 34-year-old, who, even as a child, was unstoppable once he set his mind to something. However, his parents did manage to insist that the future racing driver must pass his school leaving examination, which he managed to do – despite missing a few lessons – with a good average mark and English as his favourite subject. “As a kid, I could not understand the post-race press conferences on television. That is why I attended an extra English course for children,” he recalls.

After eleven years of karting, the young driver moved to Formula racers. The young Bortolotti received valuable support as a member of the Italian development squad. In 2008, he won the Italian Formula 3 Championship. This was followed in 2011 by the title in FIA Formula 2 and a spell as a Formula 1 test driver at Ferrari, Toro Rosso and Williams. “Unlike nowadays, they wanted a ready-made champion in Formula 1 back then, and placed less emphasis on young drivers who could then be developed. The tests went well, but it was not enough and you just have to accept that,” says Bortolotti.

In 2014, he began working with Lamborghini Squadra Corse. After just two races as a Junior driver, Bortolotti was promoted to works driver in 2015. Two years later, he won the Blancpain GT Series and the Blancpain GT Series Endurance Cup (now the GT World Challenge Europe). He also finished runner-up in the ADAC GT Masters in 2019. Bortolotti also won trophies on the endurance scene: “One of my greatest successes was winning in Daytona in 2018. It was Lamborghini’s first victory in a 24-hour race and a historic and very emotional moment, which I will never forget,” recalls the Austrian resident, who repeated the triumph in the GTD class the following year.

One thing missing from his trophy collection was the DTM title – until this year. However, the season did not get off to a great start at all. After finishing runner-up in race one, the Lamborghini ace was on course for victory for much of the Sunday race at the season-opener in Oschersleben. However, a poor

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pit stop cost him another top result and he eventually had to settle for 15<sup>th</sup> place. “If you make a mistake like that in the DTM, then your race is over. Moments like that really hurt,” says Bortolotti, describing the situation in Oschersleben. He then finished outside the top five in two of the next three races. However, Bortolotti showed plenty of fighting spirit, worked hard with his team, and was rewarded for his efforts. The Italian made it onto the podium at Circuit Zandvoort, the Norisring, the Nürburgring, and the Sachsenring. The duel for the title with Audi driver Kelvin van der Linde appeared to spur Bortolotti on to greater things, particularly against the clock in qualifying. He started from the front row of the grid on eight occasions in his Lamborghini Huracán GT3 Evo2 – more than any other driver.

He has also shown strong nerves, worthy of a champion: a disappointing seventh place in the Sunday race at the Sachsenring saw van der Linde return to the top of the table, stirring up memories of last year, when Bortolotti also surrendered top spot in the closing stages of the season and was unable to bounce back at the finale. The talented sportsman also failed to consistently produce his best performances in his first full year in the DTM in 2022. Despite leading the championship at the halfway point, he eventually had to settle for fourth place. But this year was a different story. Bortolotti showed nerves of steel at the penultimate round at the Red Bull Ring. He returned to the top of the table with his only win of the season, before travelling as championship leader to the Hockenheimring, where he clinched his first DTM title.

Bortolotti’s celebrations knew no bounds. Emotional scenes, consistent with the development of a racing driver who is otherwise rather reserved and fully focussed on achieving the best possible performance. Even at the opening round in Oschersleben, Bortolotti was closer than ever to the fans, as he specifically took time out for spectators during the autograph session in the DTM Fan Zone. It was perhaps this attitude that gave allowed him to relax sufficiently in the tense title race. Bortolotti, whose family has run ice cream parlours in Vienna for several decades, came across somewhat colder in front of the TV cameras. He wants to be taken seriously as a racing driver, and prefers to do his talking on the track. And Bortolotti successfully did precisely that, winning the DTM title in what was probably his most intense season. As well as racing in the DTM, Bortolotti also lined up in the FIA World Endurance Championship at the wheel of Lamborghini’s first hybrid racing prototype, in the development of which he played an instrumental role. His status in Italian motorsport can also be seen on the virtual platform: Bortolotti accompanies players in career mode on the racing simulation Assetto Corsa.

After a long season, the 2024 DTM champion now has time to follow his favourite football club AC Milan, and to train at home on the simulator. “Privately, the most important thing is my health. If I have time, I will also go travelling again, to experience the world away from the racetrack,” reveals Bortolotti. Anyone who knows the new DTM champion knows that he will also refuse to lose sight of these personal goals.

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