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Maiden DTM title: New champion Bortolotti makes history

- **Second place sees Lamborghini driver crowned champion**
- **Luca Engstler claims his second DTM victory thanks to a clever strategy**
- **95,000 spectators watch an exciting final weekend in Hockenheim**

Hockenheim. Good things come to those who wait: Mirko Bortolotti (I) claimed his first DTM title at the third attempt. Second place in Sunday's final race of the season at the Hockenheimring Baden-Württemberg was enough to see the Vienna resident realise his dream of becoming a DTM champion. "That was the best second place of my career, and earned me my nicest title so far. After finishing fourth and second in the past two years, there was a lot of pressure. However, we did it with our great team. I have been with Lamborghini through thick and thin for ten years. With this title, I have been able to pay back a little of the trust that they have placed in me," said Bortolotti, who also presented his team SSR Performance and Lamborghini with their first title in the DTM. The only man faster than the 34-year-old in race 16 of the season was fellow Lamborghini driver Luca Engstler (Kempten) from Lamborghini Team Liqui Moly by GRT, who celebrated his second victory of the year. Third place went to René Rast (Bregenz) in a BMW M4 GT3 for Schubert Motorsport, who ended the season as the top team. Mercedes-AMG won the Manufacturer title. A total of 95,000 visitors witnessed a thrilling and unpredictable DTM finale at the Hockenheimring, and ultimately celebrated a worthy champion in Mirko Bortolotti.

Key facts, Hockenheimring, Hockenheim, race 16 of 16

- **Length:** 4,574 metres
- **Weather:** 14 degrees, cloudy
- **Pole position:** Mirko Bortolotti (SSR Performance, Lamborghini Huracán GT3 Evo2 #92), 1:36.708 minutes
- **Winner:** Luca Engstler (Lamborghini Team Liqui Moly by GRT, Lamborghini Huracán GT3 Evo2 #19)
- **Fastest lap:** Luca Engstler (Lamborghini Team Liqui Moly by GRT, Lamborghini Huracán GT3 Evo2 #19) 1:38.066 minutes

Bortolotti got off to an ideal start on Sunday afternoon, in front of packed grandstands at the Hockenheimring. The pole-sitter was soon able to pull clear, followed in second place by his team-mate Nicki Thiim (DK). Behind them, Ricardo Feller (CH) in an Audi R8 LMS GT3 Evo2 for Abt Sportsline, Engstler and Lucas Auer (A) from Mercedes-AMG Team Mann-Filter slotted into positions three to five. Even at this early point, Bortolotti was clearly on course to win the championship. His closest rival Kelvin van der Linde (ZA), who trailed him by just one point, had dropped from fifth back to eleventh place after a poor start.

By the midway point of the race, Bortolotti had opened a lead of over three seconds and came in late for his mandatory pit stop. The Lamborghini works driver rejoined the race in first place, but was overtaken shortly after by a charging Engstler. The 24-year-old had stopped earlier and was unstoppable on his warm Pirelli tyres. Behind the leading duo, Rast had climbed into third place. Thomas Preining (A) from Manthey EMA lay fourth in his Porsche 911 GT3 R after a quick tyre change.

Engstler took the chequered flag after 37 laps. 0.455 seconds later, he was followed over the finish line by the new DTM champion Bortolotti in second place. Behind Rast and Preining, the impressive Thiim battled his way to fifth place in the final race of the season. Feller came home sixth, while BMW driver Marco Wittmann (Fürth) made up twelve positions to finish seventh. Auer was eighth, ahead of the third Schubert Motorsport BMW with Sheldon van der Linde (ZA) in the cockpit. Maro Engel (Monaco), who finished third in the championship, completed the top ten in his Mercedes-AMG GT3. Kelvin van der Linde was unable to affect the title race and ended the race in twelfth place.

Luca Engstler: “I won my first DTM race at the opening round in Oschersleben. It feels fantastic to claim my second victory at the finale. I am speechless and struggling to take it all in. After our early pit stop, I drove as if my life depended on it and managed to overtake Mirko Bortolotti. I had the feeling that Mirko did not want to risk too much to win the race, with one eye on the championship. If anyone deserves to win the title, it is him.”

René Rast: “We got the maximum out of the situation and, thanks to a good strategy and a fast pit stop, worked our way from eleventh into third place. However, we are not happy with fourth place in the championship. We were simply not good enough in qualifying. Unfortunately, that meant we never really had a chance of winning the title. However, winning the Team competition is a great success. I am pleased for the guys, who did a fantastic job.”

Thomas Preining: “Congratulations to Mirko Bortolotti! I had a really tough battle for the title with him last season. He fully deserved to win this year.”

Kelvin van der Linde: “It is not the result we were hoping for, but that is racing for you. We invested a lot of energy in the title race, got everything out of our package, and only made a few mistakes. I am proud of our team after this long season.”

Result of race 16 of the season at the Hockenheimring

1. Luca Engstler (D/Lamborghini Team Liqui Moly by GRT)
2. Mirko Bortolotti (I/SSR Performance), +0.455 seconds
3. René Rast (D/Schubert Motorsport), +1.834 seconds
4. Thomas Preining (A/Manthey EMA), +16.802 seconds
5. Nicki Thiim (DK/SSR Performance), +18.001 seconds

The full result can be found at dtm.com/en/results.

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