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New car, clear mission: René Rast wants a fourth DTM title

- **Rast starts with a brand-new BMW M4 GT3 Evo**
- **BMW works driver lines up in his eighth DTM season**

Munich. As a three-time champion with 28 race wins to his name, René Rast is one of the top stars in the DTM. This year, the man from Minden lines up in a new BMW M4 GT3 Evo. Together with Schubert Motorsport from Oschersleben, Rast is set to contest his eighth DTM season. That season kicks off from 25th to 27th April with a home outing for his team at Motorsport Arena Oschersleben. In an interview, the 38-year-old discusses the challenge of battling for the title, the evenly-matched field, and his love of the DTM.

As a three-time champion, do you still feel the tingle of anticipation ahead of the start of the season?

Yes, absolutely. I am going into my eighth DTM season, but to be honest, every year feels a bit like the first. Plus, you have new drivers, new teams and new cars. Nobody knows in advance who is really going to be battling at the top. That is exactly what makes the DTM so exciting every year. You spend the winter preparing meticulously for this moment in simulator sessions, communal meetings and team workshops. As soon as you get back in the car, you sense it immediately: here we go again! And that feeling is just awesome.

What are your expectations for the new season?

Expectations are hard to formulate, because you never know how strong you are really going to be compared to the opposition. Last year, we won the Team title. This season we want to be up at the top of the Drivers Championship too. Consistency is key: you don't have to win every race, but you do have to score points regularly and avoid DNFs. In the end, what matters is the overall package of car, driver, team and strategy. Whoever does the best job of bringing all that together has the best chances of winning the title.

What improvements have been made to the BMW M4 GT3 with the Evo package?

This is my third year with BMW and the car is basically the same. I know the car well and feel right at home. The new Evo package will hopefully bring a bit more performance and make the car even easier to drive. We were usually strong in the races, but our weakness last year was in qualifying. If we can solve that, then it looks good for us.

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There have been a lot of changes in the DTM field, with new drivers, teams and manufacturers. What impact will that have?

I think it could be a bit tight on the track at times, with 24 cars in the field - particularly in qualifying. If you don't get a clear lap, you soon find yourself at the back of the grid. With such a big field, it is far from easy to fight your way through from the rear. New faces on the grid will also add to the excitement. I am very excited about the first showdown at the season-opener in Oschersleben, and am sure that the fans can look forward to many thrilling races.

Timo Glock is making his DTM comeback this year. What can we expect from him?

Timo is a good driver, was successful in Formula 1 and has also impressed in the DTM. I still remember his battle with Gary Paffett a few years ago in Hockenheim. They are still showing that in highlight videos to this day. I am pleased to have him back in the field.

How have preparations been ahead of your third year with BMW in the DTM?

We obviously met in person to go through strategies, exchange experiences from last year, and find our rhythm again as a team. Nowadays, a lot of the set-up work is done digitally. However, we had a teambuilding get-together and a barbecue together, which strengthens the team spirit. What helps Marco and me as the two drivers is that we both have a wealth of experience and speak the same language. That makes the job easier for the whole team. Without a strong team- whether mechanics, strategy or communications - you won't get anywhere in motorsport.

What are your personal highlights on the DTM calendar?

The Norisring is certainly a circuit that really suits me. The event takes place in the middle of summer, the grandstands are full and the atmosphere among the fans is simply incredible. The tight and short layout mean the races there are always packed with action. From a sporting perspective, the Red Bull Ring is traditionally a happy hunting ground for BMW, as was underlined by my victory there last year. However, the circuit I am most looking forward to is Zandvoort: nestled in the dunes, right on the coast, with fast corners and hardly any run-off zones - that makes this track particularly appealing to me.

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