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Lamborghini on top: Jordan Pepper starts strongly at the Norisring

- **South African the only driver to dip below 49 seconds in practice**
- **Gilles Magnus takes surprise second place in the Aston Martin**
- **Close affair: 24-strong field separated by just 0.54 seconds**

Nuremberg. Jordan Pepper (ZA) is flying after his victory at the 24 Hours of Spa-Francorchamps with Grasser Racing Team. The Lamborghini driver set Friday's fastest practice time of 48.857 seconds at the Norisring and was the only driver to break the 49-second barrier. "After my win at the 24-hour race in Spa, I am carrying a lot of momentum into the Norisring weekend. The last time I drove here was eleven years ago in the VW Scirocco Cup, when I actually took pole position. The Norisring is unique: I like these tight, risky situations along the walls, in which you have to be extremely focussed," said the South African from TGI Team Lamborghini by GRT after the opening two sessions of the fourth round of this season's DTM.

Gilles Magnus (B) was the surprise package of day in an Aston Martin Vantage GT3 run by Comtoyou Racing: the DTM newcomer was second after the two practice sessions, just 0.161 seconds off the top time. Thierry Vermeulen (NL) from Emil Frey Racing also looked in fine form, guiding his Ferrari 296 GT3 to third place. Porsche works driver Thomas Preining (A) was fourth fastest in the Manthey EMA Porsche 911.

The fifth-fastest time came courtesy of Maximilian Paul (Dresden) from Paul Motorsport in a Lamborghini Huracán GT3 Evo2. The 25-year-old had set the fastest time of the opening practice session, stopping the clock at 49.468 seconds. However, FP1 proved to be significantly slower than Free Practice 2 in the afternoon. "The Norisring is a cool track. However, as a street circuit, it is very unique," said Paul. "There are many bumps and hard braking zones. You need a lot of finesse and the right set-up. I am looking forward to the weekend. The atmosphere with the large crowds here is unique and something that everyone should experience."

The drivers started Friday afternoon's free practice far more aggressively than the morning session. It took only a few laps to break the 50-second barrier on the 2.162-kilometre street circuit in Nuremberg. Pepper set the fastest time with eight minutes remaining, and his time of 48.898 seconds a lap later was only slightly slower. Magnus and Vermeulen snatched second and third place shortly before the end of FP2, while Paul crept into the top five in the final few seconds.

The qualifying sessions at the Norisring were held in two groups, to allow for the size of the field. Taking the practice times from the two sessions as a basis, the drivers in the odd positions will be first onto the track at 09:15 on Saturday. The drivers in the even positions follow at 09:40. On Sunday, the groups will take on the 20-minute race against the clock in reverse order. Fans can watch qualifying via a livestream on [Joyn](#) and the [YouTube channel @DTM](#). ProSieben is broadcasting all 16 of this season's races live on free-to-air TV, with coverage beginning at 13:00 on Saturday and Sunday.

Qualifying group 1:

Jordan Pepper (ZA/TGI Team Lamborghini by GRT)
Thierry Vermeulen (NL/Emil Frey Racing)
Maximilian Paul (D/Paul Motorsport)
Arjun Maini (IND/HRT Ford Performance)
Ricardo Feller (CH/Land-Motorsport)
René Rast (D/Schubert Motorsport)
Timo Glock (D/Dörr Motorsport)
Luca Engstler (D/TGI Team Lamborghini by GRT)
Maro Engel (D/Mercedes-AMG Team Winward Racing)
Jules Gounon (F/Mercedes-AMG Team Mann-Filter)
Marco Wittmann (D/Schubert Motorsport)
Morris Schuring (NL/Manthey Junior Team)

Qualifying group 2:

Gilles Magnus (B/Comtoyou Racing)
Thomas Preining (A/Manthey EMA)
Jack Aitken (GB/Emil Frey Racing)
Nicolas Baert (B/Comtoyou Racing)
Nicki Thiim (DK/Abt Sportsline)
Mirko Bortolotti (I/Abt Sportsline)
Lucas Auer (A/Mercedes-AMG Team Landgraf)
Tom Kalender (D/Mercedes-AMG Team Landgraf)
Ayhan Can Güven (TR/Manthey EMA)
Ben Dörr (D/Dörr Motorsport)
Fabio Scherer (CH/HRT Ford Performance)
Ben Green (GB/Emil Frey Racing)

All results from the Norisring are available at dtm.com/en/results.

Media Information



Media Contact

ADAC e.V.

Oliver Runschke, T +49 89 76 76 69 65, E-mail oliver.runschke@adac.de

Kay-Oliver Langendorff, T +49 89 76 76 69 36, E-mail kay.langendorff@adac.de

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