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Maiden DTM win: Pepper party at the Norisring

- **Lamborghini driver claims commanding victory in race seven of the season**
- **Second place represents Thomas Preining's best result of the season**
- **Lucas Auer defends his championship lead in front of packed grandstands**

Nuremberg. Jordan Pepper (ZA) is unstoppable at the Norisring. The 28-year-old showed no signs of weakness in Saturday's DTM race, claiming a comfortable lights-to-flag victory in a Lamborghini Huracán GT3 Evo2 run by TGI Team Lamborghini by GRT. Pepper's first DTM win saw him continue an impressive run of success at the street circuit in Nuremberg, having also been the fastest man in practice and qualifying. "What an unbelievably emotional moment for me. I am incredibly proud and still cannot really believe it. The final laps seemed to last for ever. However, I gave it my all and remained focussed right through to the finish," said a thrilled Pepper. Thomas Preining (A/Manthey EMA) came home second in a Porsche 911 GT3 R after a tactically mature display. Third place went to Mercedes-AMG driver Maro Engel (Monaco) from Mercedes-AMG Team Winward Racing.

Key facts, Norisring, Nuremberg, race 7 of 16

- **Circuit length:** 2,126 metres
- **Weather:** sunny, 29 degrees
- **Pole position:** Jordan Pepper (TGI Team Lamborghini by GRT, Lamborghini Huracán GT3 Evo2 #63), 48.467 seconds
- **Winner:** Jordan Pepper (TGI Team Lamborghini by GRT, Lamborghini Huracán GT3 Evo2 #63)
- **Fastest lap:** Jack Aitken (Emil Frey Racing, Ferrari 296 GT3 #14), 49.052 seconds

Pole-sitter Pepper underlined his top form at the start of Saturday's seventh race of the DTM season. The South African did a great job of defending his lead, and proceeded to pull clear of the field as the race progressed. Behind him, Thierry Vermeulen (NL/Emil Frey Racing) in a Ferrari 296 GT3 and Preining slotted into second and third place. They both benefitted from a collision between Lamborghini drive Nicki Thiim (DN/Abt Sportsline), who had started from second place, and Engel. While the Dane dropped back, the Mercedes-AMG driver was able to continue in fourth. Jack Aitken (GB) found himself fifth in the second Emil Frey Racing Ferrari.

The leading duo of Pepper and Vermeulen did not come in for their tyre change until the end of the pit stop window. The two drivers' teams took longer than the chasing pack to heat up the new Pirelli slicks. While Pepper's lead of roughly five seconds allowed him to rejoin the race at the front of the field, Vermeulen fell back to fourth. Preining and Engel, on the other hand, climbed into second and third place after very quick stops. Pepper then continued to control proceedings from the front in the final third of the race, and took the chequered flag after 65 laps with a lead of more than three seconds. Aitken completed the top five, behind Preining, Engel and Vermeulen.

Lucas Auer (A) had an inconspicuous race in the Mercedes-AMG GT3. However, sixth place was enough for the 30-year-old from Mercedes-AMG Team Landgraf to defend his lead at the top of the table, with Pepper now his closest rival in second place overall. Auer's fellow Mercedes-AMG driver Jules Gounon (F/Mercedes-AMG Team Mann-Filter) was seventh, followed in eighth by Arjun Maini (IND) from HRT Ford Performance in a Ford Mustang GT3. Ricardo Feller (CH) made up six positions in an Audi R8 LMS GT3 Evo2 to finish ninth for Land-Motorsport. BMW driver René Rast (Bregenz/Schubert Motorsport) finished tenth, having started down in 17th.

Thomas Preining: "I am totally happy with second place. We had no chance against the Lamborghini, but made the most of what we had. We gained a position at the start and came into the pits for the tyre change at the right time. That strategy secured second place for us. The heat is immense inside the car, but you can shut that out during the race."

Maro Engel: "The podium was the best we could have hoped for today. We gave it our all and the team produced one of the fastest pit stops we have ever had. My collision with Thiim at the start was a real shame, but I was already turning in and he, unfortunately, did not give me any space. The race was very intensive, but the hard work paid dividends."

Result of race seven of the season at the Norisring

1. Jordan Pepper (ZA/TGI Team Lamborghini by GRT)
2. Thomas Preining (A/Manthey EMA), +3.055 seconds
3. Maro Engel (D/Mercedes-AMG Team Winward Racing), +4.132 seconds
4. Thierry Vermeulen (NL/Emil Frey Racing), +5.596 seconds
5. Jack Aitken (GB/Emil Frey Racing), +6.557 seconds

The full result is 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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