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Dream start for the Austrians: Preining leads Auer home at the Red Bull Ring

- **Preining wins first DTM race of the season, ahead of compatriot Auer**
- **Pole-sitter Engel finishes third in a Mercedes-AMG**
- **Best McLaren result in the DTM for ex-Formula 1 driver Glock**

Spielberg. A clever strategy and strong nerves were the key to success: Thomas Preining (A/Manthey) produced a flawless display on Saturday to win his home DTM race at the Red Bull Ring for the second time. The opening race in Styria saw the Porsche works driver cross the finish line in first place after 38 laps to claim his ninth victory in the DTM. Preining's compatriot Lucas Auer (Mercedes-AMG Team Landgraf) followed him home to make it an Austrian one-two at the Formula 1 circuit. "I could not be happier. As a racing driver, you dream of moments like this! To win in front of my family and many friends feels absolutely awesome. It was a very challenging race, with some very fast competition from Mercedes-AMG. Lucas Auer really put me under pressure at the end, so I was pretty relieved to cross the finish line," said the man from Linz, who was also voted "Driver of the Day" powered by PME Legend by the fans. Maro Engel (Monaco/Mercedes-AMG Team Ravenol) was third in a race that went right down to the wire.

Key facts, Red Bull Ring, Spielberg, race 1 of 16

- **Circuit length:** 4,326 metres
- **Weather:** 20 degrees, sunny
- **Pole position:** Maro Engel (Mercedes-AMG Team Ravenol, Mercedes-AMG GT3 #80), 1:27.403 minutes
- **Winner:** Thomas Preining (Manthey, Porsche 911 GT3 R #91)
- **Fastest lap:** Bastian Buus (Land-Motorsport, Porsche 911 GT3 R #29), 1:28.739 minutes

The highly-anticipated start to the opening DTM race of the 2026 championship was hard fought from the word go. While pole-sitter Engel did a great job of defending his lead, Preining passed Auer to take second place. That trio was followed in fourth by Jules Gounon (F/Mercedes-AMG Team Mann-Filter), who had overtaken Ben Dörr (Butzbach/Dörr Motorsport). Shortly thereafter, Dörr's McLaren 720S GT3 Evo crashed into the barriers after contact with another car, forcing the McLaren driver out of the race.

The pit stops shook things up at the front of the field: Gounon and Preining came in for new Pirelli slicks as early as laps 14 and 15. Two laps later, Engel came into the pits. However, he lost

valuable seconds after issues during the tyre change. That left Preining free to take the lead ahead of Gounon. Auer also moved ahead of Engel after his mandatory stop, slotting into third place. On lap 33, Gounon's race came to a sudden end with a technical issue. That opened the door for Auer, who found himself within striking distance of the leader after a safety car phase. However, Preining remained ice cool and refused to allow his compatriot to get close enough to challenge. The 27-year-old was led home in first place by the safety car, after Kelvin van der Linde (ZA) was forced to retire with his BMW M4 GT3 Evo. Preining was followed home by Auer, Engel and Tom Kalender (Hamm/Sieg/Mercedes-AMG Team Landgraf), who produced a fine performance to climb from tenth to fourth place.

Marco Wittmann (Fürth/Schubert Motorsport) was the best-placed BMW driver in fifth, while Timo Glock (Kreuzlingen/Dörr Motorsport) steered the second McLaren 720S GT3 Evo to sixth place. Arjun Maini (IND/HRT Ford Racing) made up nine positions and finished seventh. Matteo Cairoli (I/Emil Frey Racing) ended his first DTM race in the Ferrari 296 GT3 Evo in eighth place, ahead of Porsche racer Ricardo Feller (CH/Manthey). Nicki Thiim (DK/Comtoyou Racing) completed the top ten.

Lucas Auer: "We prepared meticulously for the opener, and second place is the reward for that hard work. In the closing stages, I was hoping for a mistake from Thomas Preining, but second place at my home event is also a top result. Ahead of the race on Sunday, we must analyse what strategy is best with the new tyre."

Maro Engel: "Up until the pit stop, it was a perfect day for us. When you have led so well for so long, third place feels disappointing. The crew in the garage has always done a superb job in the past, so I have no criticism of the team at all. We have a strong package and will push hard again on Sunday."

Result of race one of the season at the Red Bull Ring

1. Thomas Preining (A/Manthey)
2. Lucas Auer (A/Mercedes-AMG Team Landgraf), +0.774 seconds
3. Maro Engel (D/Mercedes-AMG Team Ravenol), +1.620 seconds
4. Tom Kalender (D/Mercedes-AMG Team Landgraf), +2.544 seconds
5. Marco Wittmann (D/Schubert Motorsport), +2.763 seconds

The full result is available at dtm.com/en/results.

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