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### Six drivers, one title: Showdown for the DTM crown

- **Championship leader Preining holds 23-point lead ahead of season finale**
- **Just one point separates Preining's closest rivals, Engel and Wittmann**
- **Auer, Cairoli and Thiim poised to take their chance at the title**

Munich. Six drivers, six title dreams – but there can be only one champion. The 2026 DTM title race will be decided at the grand finale at the Hockenheimring Baden-Württemberg (9<sup>th</sup> to 11<sup>th</sup> October). A maximum 56 points are still up for grabs at the circuit near Heidelberg. Thomas Preining (A/Manthey) travels to Hockenheim with his fate in his own hands. The Porsche works driver leads the Drivers' Championship with 197 points and is hoping to be crowned DTM champion for the second time, having previously won the coveted title in 2023. His closest rival, 23 points off the lead, is Maro Engel (D/Mercedes-AMG Team Ravenol). Just one point back is two-time champion Marco Wittmann (D/Schubert Motorsport). Lucas Auer (A/Mercedes-AMG Team Landgraf), Matteo Cairoli (I/Emil Frey Racing) and Nicki Thiim (DK/Comtoyou Racing) are also still in with a chance of clinching the title.

#### Can Preining crown his surge to glory?

Preining has hit top form with impeccable timing at the business end of the season. The Austrian has finished on the podium in the last six races in a row - something nobody has ever achieved before him in the GT3 era of the DTM. An impressive 127 of Preining's 197 points have come over the course of the past three race weekends, propelling him to the top of the table at the Sachsenring. The 28-year-old is hoping to continue that run at the finale, and to add a second DTM title to the one he won in 2023. "A lead of over 20 points sounds comfortable. However, I have witnessed at first hand just how quickly that can disappear, as I have recently overturned a deficit of that size. We are as well prepared as possible, and I come into the finale feeling great," says Preining. He has shown on multiple occasions that the Hockenheimring suits the Porsche works driver: Preining has celebrated three DTM victories at the circuit near Mannheim.

#### Will Engel make it a championship-winning year in his milestone season?

Engel's season has played out very differently to that of Preining. The Mercedes-AMG driver led the championship for a long time after a strong first half of the year. However, things have not gone entirely to plan of late for Engel, who is usually so consistent, resulting in Preining replacing him at the top of the table at the Sachsenring. However, now 23 points off top spot, the Monaco resident still has everything to play for at the finale. "It is rather special for me to be challenging for the DTM title in Hockenheim for the third year in a row," Engel is keen to stress. "The anticipation is huge and I am excited to see how the races pan out." The man currently second in the table is contesting his tenth DTM season this year, making him one of the most experienced drivers in the field. It is precisely that experience that Engel is hoping to call upon in Hockenheim, as he looks to crown his milestone season with the first DTM title of his career.

### Can Wittmann make it DTM title number three?

Wittmann travels to Hockenheim with the bit between his teeth. The BMW driver has really upped his game in the second half of the season and worked his way impressively back into the title race. After some strong performances, with two wins and multiple podiums, he now trails Preining by just 24 points ahead of the finale. The 36-year-old celebrated his 20th DTM race win at the Nürburgring, and win number 21 was to follow at the Sachsenring. "I come into the finale as the hunter and have nothing to lose. Hockenheim has always been a happy hunting ground for me. The circuit is a lot of fun," says Wittmann, who has four DTM wins to his name at the iconic circuit in Baden-Württemberg. In 2014, this was the scene of the driver from Fürth's first ever victory in the DTM, and he went on to win his first title in the same year. Two years later, he picked up title number two. Ten years have passed since then, and Wittmann is hoping to finally add a third DTM trophy to his collection.

### Auer, Cairoli and Thiim lurking, waiting for their chance

Even when you look beyond the leading trio, the title race is still alive. Auer comes into the final in fourth place with 152 points - 45 behind Preining. A further two points back is Cairoli. The Ferrari driver is the only racer with three DTM wins to his name this season. Thiim (147 points) lies sixth in the table and is the last of the title contenders. The situation is clear for this trio: Auer, Cairoli and Thiim must produce a stunning performance in Hockenheim, and hope that the opposition slips up.

### Drivers' Championship after 14 of 16 races

1. Thomas Preining (A/Manthey), 197 points
2. Maro Engel (D/Mercedes-AMG Team Ravenol), 174 points
3. Marco Wittmann (D/Schubert Motorsport), 173 points
4. Lucas Auer (A/Mercedes-AMG Team Landgraf), 152 points
5. Matteo Cairoli (I/Emil Frey Racing), 150 points
6. Nicki Thiim (DK/Comtoyou Racing), 147 points

The full championship standings can be found at [dtm.com/en/standings](http://dtm.com/en/standings).

### Media Contact

#### ADAC e.V.

Oliver Runschke, T +49 89 76 76 69 65, E-mail [oliver.runschke@adac.de](mailto:oliver.runschke@adac.de)  
Kay-Oliver Langendorff, T +49 89 76 76 69 36, E-mail [kay.langendorff@adac.de](mailto:kay.langendorff@adac.de)

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