

12.10.2023

DTM showdown in Hockenheim: Three drivers gunning for the title

- Will strategist Thomas Preining's ten-point lead be enough to see him crowned champion?
- Can the unpredictable Mirko Bortolotti catch championship leader Preining?
- Will the ever-reliable Ricardo Feller in third place have the last laugh?

Munich. Three drivers come into the DTM finale with one common goal: to be crowned champion in the racing series, which enjoys great popularity all over the world. Championship leader Thomas Preining (A) holds a ten-point lead over his fiercest rival, Lamborghini works driver Mirko Bortolotti, making him the slight favourite in his Porsche 911 GT3 going into the final two races at the Hockenheimring. With 56 points still up for grabs, third-placed Ricardo Feller (CH) could also realise his dream of winning the championship with a perfect final weekend in the Audi R8 LMS GT3 Evo2. The Swiss currently trails Preining by 31 points, but is poised to pounce should the front two slip up. Spectators can look forward to an explosive three-way battle for the DTM crown at the showdown in Hockenheim (20th to 22nd October).

Thomas Preining – the strategist

Championship leader Preining has impressed this season as one of the fastest and most consistent drivers in the high-class, international field. The Austrian has also shown that he can keep a cool head in difficult situations and comes back stronger after setbacks. The Porsche works driver claimed his only win of the season so far at the Norisring and has shown remarkable fighting spirit to battle back on several occasions. Preining is now out to crown his impressive season with the title in Hockenheim. Last year, the man from Linz was among the main protagonists in Hockenheim, where he was among the title contenders coming into the finale. "The Hockenheimring is one of my favourite racetracks, although the circuit did not necessarily produce the best headlines of my career last year," says Preining, referring to his spectacular crash that dashed any hopes of winning the title. Despite this, the 25-year-old from Manthey EMA is looking forward to returning to the iconic German circuit: "I have super memories of the track. I am usually fast there and have won many races and championships in Hockenheim."

Mirko Bortolotti – the unpredictable

The Lamborghini ace has been one of the best GT drivers in the world for many years. The Italian, who lives in Vienna, has three wins to his name this season – one more than his two title rivals put together. Bortolotti is also a force to be reckoned with in qualifying: the Lamborghini works driver has amassed twelve points in qualifying, more than any other driver this season. However, unlike his rivals, the 33-year-old has twice failed to pick up points – there is sometimes a thin line between success and failure. In the second half of the season, Bortolotti has regularly swapped places with Preining at the top of the table. "The way the season has panned out means we are in the great position of being able to challenge for the DTM title in Hockenheim. It does not really matter whether I come into the finale as the championship leader or in second place. What matters is after the weekend, not before it," says a bullish Bortolotti. The SSR Performance driver expects two wide open races in Hockenheim: "It is



SCHAEFFLER



Media Information

always very difficult to predict the balance of power in the DTM. The season has already produced one or two surprises. It will be important to realise our own potential." The key to that could be a perfect qualifying, as all three of Bortolotti's victories so far have come from pole position.

Ricardo Feller – the ever-reliable

Like Preining, the 23-year-old has demonstrated great consistency and scored at least one point in each of the 14 races so far. "The title race will come down to several aspects, with luck definitely being one of them. There is no longer any room for mistakes, all three title contenders must consistently be right up there in both qualifying sessions and races. It will not be easy to deal with the pressure," says Feller, looking ahead to the finale. Having said that, the youngster has shown this season that he refuses to allow pressure to knock him out of his stride. Feller thrilled spectators at the Red Bull Ring in Austria with an impressive fightback from 26th to third place. He also kept his cool en route to victory in Zandvoort in the Netherlands. "The DTM is so evenly matched that anything is possible. Ideally, we want both our cars to finish ahead of Thomas Preining and Mirko Bortolotti, in order to deny them some points," says Feller, explaining the grand plan. Currently sitting third in the table, he has proven on several occasions this season that he is the man for the big moment. With this in mind, he is justified in believing he can still win the title, despite his role as the outsider. His team has played a big role in this season's success: with five titles in both the Team and Driver competitions, Abt Sportsline is the most successful racing team still active in the DTM.

The three-way race for the title is still wide open coming into the finale in Hockenheim. However, one thing is already certain: fans can look forward to a thrilling conclusion to the season. The two decisive races start at 13:30 on Saturday and Sunday. Tickets are available from 39 euros at dtm.com.

2023 DTM calendar

26.05. – 28.05.2023	Motorsport Arena Oschersleben
23.06. – 25.06.2023	Circuit Zandvoort / NL
07.07. – 09.07.2023	Norisring
04.08. – 06.08.2023	Nürburgring
18.08. – 20.08.2023	DEKRA Lausitzring
08.09. – 10.09.2023	Sachsenring
22.09. – 24.09.2023	Red Bull Ring / A
20.10. – 22.10.2023	Hockenheimring Baden-Württemberg

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

[dtm.com](https://www.dtm.com)



SCHAEFFLER

