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Profile of a champion: Lirim Zendeli

- **ADAC Formula 4 record: Champion at earliest point in season**
- **Zendeli wins championship on home turf in the Eifel**
- **Successor to Juri Vips, Joey Mawson and Marvin Dienst**

Lirim Zendeli (18, Germany, US Racing CHRS) has done even better than predecessors Marvin Dienst, Joey Mawson and Juri Vips by sealing his title win in the ADAC Formula 4 during the penultimate race weekend of the season at the Nürburgring – none of the previous champions in the ADAC High-Speed Academy managed to achieve their successes so early before the end of the season. The new champion, 18-year-old Lirim Zendeli from Bochum, moved into an unassailable position at the top of the standings following the 17th of 20 races of the season and was overjoyed to have done so.

“It’s great to win ahead of time. This is my home circuit here and I’ve finally pulled it off. I can now go out and simply enjoy the last three races at the Hockenheimring and take a bit more of a risk,” said the new champion, who finished fifth on Sunday to claim the title before season’s end. Since the first race at Oschersleben in April, which US Racing CHRS driver Zendeli won, he has been at the top of the standings and has kept the lead the whole year. Even as rivals Liam Lawson (16, New Zealand, Van Amersfoort Racing), Enzo Fittipaldi (17, USA/Brazil, Prema Theodore Racing) and Frederik Vesti (16, Denmark, Van Amersfoort Racing) reeled him in, Zendeli stayed calm and took more points. Eight wins from 17 races say it all.

For Ralf Schumacher and Gerhard Ungar, who successfully manage Zendeli’s team, US Racing CHRS, the championship title is well deserved. “We’re very pleased, very happy indeed. There’s a lot of pressure on you in your third year, and you have to be able to deal with it initially, so it’s definitely well deserved. It’s also nice for us as a team to have produced the drivers’ champion”, said Ungar.

Even the competition recognise Zendeli’s achievements. “He’s always driven error-free and has been in front ever since Oschersleben. He was great in qualifying too, always fair in the races and he definitely deserves it,” said rookie Niklas Krütten, who is still battling for a title win in the ADAC Formula 4 Rookie Cup.

Zendeli started his third ADAC Formula 4 season with the definite aim of winning the championship in mind. “Anything else would be a disappointment”, he used to say. He made his debut in the ADAC High-Speed Academy in 2016 and immediately showed his class with a podium for second place at Zandvoort. In 2017, he finished fourth in the overall standings behind the Top Three – Juri Vips (Estonia), Marcus Armstrong (New Zealand) and Felipe Drugovich (Brazil). With three victories last year – at Oschersleben, on the Nürburgring and at the Hockenheimring – there was already an indication of what might be expected of him in 2018.

He has more than lived up to those expectations this year. He first got started in motorsport, like so many before him, in karting. His father loves fast cars and his son, of course, too. They used to sit together in front of the TV every Sunday to watch Formula 1. But Zendeli soon showed that he is not just a fan but is also hugely talented. He was faster than anyone else after just a few weeks at the kart track.

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He eventually moved into formula racing and joined the ADAC Formula 4. When he's not racing, he likes to practise sport a lot and meet up with friends. His school has always been understanding, allowing him the necessary freedom to pursue his career, because racing drivers are always on the move. Zendeli has just finished his school-leaving exams, but motorsport is now his top priority.



He has not yet decided what to do next. As regards the future, he is very keen to make his way as a pro driver. Ever since the joint ADAC Formula 4/Formula 1 weekend at Hockenheim this July, he has dreamt of racing in the premier class at some point. He now has something really good to put on his application form – the ADAC Formula 4 title win.

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