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Zakspeed at the Nürburgring: Home fixture and special milestone

- Outfit is celebrating its 50th birthday this year
- Ex-F1 team has successfully contested the ADAC GT Masters since 2014
- Team Principal Peter Zakowski thinks they stand a good chance of achieving success at the Nürburgring

Munich: The upcoming ADAC GT Masters fixture at the Nürburgring (3rd - 5th August) will be a very special event for Zakspeed BKK Mobil Oil Racing for two reasons. The local team from the Eifel region of Germany are celebrating their 50th birthday this year and will be contesting a home fixture in this special birthday year. The team managed by Peter Zakowski field two Mercedes-AMG GT3s in the ADAC GT Masters and won the series in 2015.

Formula 1, Group C, North American IMSA Series, Deutsche Rennsport-Meisterschaft, DTM, ITC, ADAC Zurich 24-Hour Race at the Nürburgring, FIA GT and ADAC GT Masters – the list of series that Zakspeed have been successful in during the past 50 years is certainly long. Erich Zakowski (now 83) launched Team Zakspeed when he set up his professional motor racing outfit alongside his existing Ford workshop and dealership to contest the 1968 racing season, but since the 1990s, son Peter (52), working on his behalf, has managed the business which now encompasses a whole group of companies. Zakspeed are one of Germany's most successful outfits with 480 wins and 22 national and international championships, having achieved success as a works team for famous manufacturers, including BMW, Ford, Opel, Mercedes-Benz and Porsche.

But are they proud of their record and illustrious history? "You bet!" says Peter Zakowski. "The past 50 years have been very exciting and certainly make us very proud." And was there a particular time that he especially likes to remember? Team Principal Zakowski can't really say. "Each period in our history had its challenges. They all had their special charms and individual requirements. Still, it was the highlight of our season whenever we won a title, for sure!" says Zakowski. Their first major successes with Ford Escorts and Capris in the early 1970s will always be remembered. That was when Zakspeed became successful, becoming a house-hold name throughout the world in touring car circles as engine and chassis tuners.

Zakspeed's successes in the DTM with BMW and in the ITC with Opel but also in rally-cross will never be forgotten. The same goes for their brave efforts to get involved with Formula 1 in the 1980s with cars designed and built in-house and for their pioneering work with carbon-fibre chassis in the USA. Zakspeed have even won the ADAC Zurich 24-hour race at the Nürburgring three times (1999, 2001 and 2002).

Team Zakspeed have competed in the ADAC GT Masters since 2014, winning the title in 2015 with Sebastian Asch and Luca Ludwig in the Mercedes-Benz SLS AMG GT3. Zakspeed's Team Principal, Peter, is a big fan of the series: "The ADAC GT Masters is constantly evolving and is one of the most professional GT3 sprint series anywhere in the world," he told us. "Going up against such tough competition is a terrific challenge."

MEDIA INFORMATION

Zakspeed's best-placed pairing of Luca Stolz (22, DEU) and Sebastian Asch (32, DEU) are currently tenth in the Super Sports Car League. The start of the season was not easy for his team, but Zakowski believes that things will change for the better at the Ring: "We're stronger now and well sorted, having worked on our performance during the summer break. The Nürburgring, Zandvoort and the Sachsenring should really suit our Mercedes-AMG GT3s. We intend to attack again and be title contenders in the best-case scenario."

The team from Niederzissen to the south of Bonn are relying on the services of two young talents in the second Mercedes-AMG driven by Kim-Luis Schramm (21, DEU) and Nicolai Sylvest (21, DK). "We like working with young people. They always give the team a bit of impetus," said Zakowski. "A mix of young and experienced drivers is generally good." Zakspeed have one of the youngest drivers in the field in their ranks with Schramm, who has just moved up from the ADAC Formula 4: "He's pretty fast and his standard is good despite not having had much experience, but unfortunately, he's not yet been able to secure any finishes up front. Another competitor spun him off track once when he was well placed and he punctured on another occasion."

Zakspeed intend to celebrate their 50th birthday in September with an open-day at their Niederzissen headquarters. Many of Zakspeed's fans have already been in contact to wish them luck this August in their home fixture with the ADAC GT Masters at the Nürburgring. And who knows? Maybe the outfit will have something else to celebrate apart from their birthday, as they've certainly got what it takes to achieve good results.

Calendar for the 2018 ADAC GT Masters

13/04/18 -15/04/18	Motorsport Arena Oschersleben
27/04/18 -29/04/18	Autodrom Most (CZ)
08/06/18 -10/06/18	Red Bull Ring (AUT)
03/08/18 -05/08/18	Nürburgring
17/08/18 -19/08/18	Circuit Zandvoort (NL)
07/09/18 -09/09/18	Sachsenring
21/09/18 -23/09/18	Hockenheimring Baden-Württemberg

Further information can be found at www.adac.de/gt-masters

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