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New concept and a strong field: The ADAC GT Masters gets underway with fresh impetus

- **TV partner Sport1 brings all the live race action back to free-to-air German TV**
- **Seven manufacturers start in the ADAC GT Masters, comebacks for Ferrari and Aston Martin**

Munich. 18 at last: The ADAC GT Masters turns 18 this year, and kicks off the 2024 season with a fresh impetus. A new concept, seven premium manufacturers and a host of ambitious and talented drivers on their way to the top: these are the characteristic features of the realigned ADAC GT Masters, which gets underway from 26th to 28th April as part of the DTM event at Motorsport Arena Oschersleben near Magdeburg. Among those expected to have a big say in the title race are the two reigning champions Salman Owega (Cologne/Haupt Racing Team) and Elias Seppänen (FIN/Landgraf Motorsport), who again line up in Mercedes-AMG, only now for different teams. Owega shares the cockpit at team champions HRT with newcomer David Schumacher (Salzburg), while Seppänen looks to defend his title alongside 16-year-old Tom Kalendar, the youngest driver in the history of the ADAC GT Masters. The season-opener will be broadcast live on SPORT1 from 15:15 on Saturday and Sunday.

The ADAC GT Masters field includes 19 debutants. As well as American Taylor Hagler (Grasser Racing), the only woman in the field, the most prominent rookie is David Schumacher. The son of former Formula 1 and DTM driver Ralf has great ambitions. "For the team and us as drivers, the goal for this year is to win the title. Salman has already shown his potential last season. Given that, I am confident that we will form a strong duo."

Emil Frey Racing is causing quite a stir in the ADAC GT Masters, fielding a 296 GT3 as Ferrari makes its comeback in the series. The same can be said of Walkenhorst Motorsport, who are bringing the Aston Martin Vantage GT3 back to the ADAC GT Masters grid with driver pairings Mike David Ortmann (Ahrensfelde) / Nedis Bulatov (Cologne) and Nico Hantke (Hürth) / Chandler Hull (USA). Also returning to the series is the Fach Auto Tech team with Alexander Fach (CH) and Alexander Schwarzer (D). They made a clear statement of intent at the pre-season test in Hockenheim, where they set the fastest lap of the test.

Another exciting new feature of the 2024 ADAC GT Masters is the "Road to DTM", in which talented youngsters can go a long way to earning a DTM cockpit in the 2025 season. A total of 27 drivers start in this competition and will battle it out for support for the 2025 DTM, in the form of the entry fee for the season. They include Benjamin Hites (CHL), who lines up alongside Tim Zimmermann (Langenargen/both Grasser Racing Team) in a Lamborghini for Grasser Racing. Last year, they went head to head as rivals, but now they form a strong pairing. Also likely to have a say in the title race are Leon Köhler (Erlenbach am Main) and Maxime Oosten (NL) in a BMW M4 GT3 for FK Performance. Köhler has gained a wealth of experience in the Porsche Carrera Cup Deutschland and has also raced in the ADAC GT Masters and the DTM in the past. His team-mate made his ADAC GT Masters debut at the

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Red Bull Ring last year, and promptly claimed his maiden victory alongside BMW works driver Bruno Spengler (CAN).

Youngster Tom Kalendar (Hamm/Sieg), who was still plying his trade in the ADAC Formula 4 Junior Team last year, is set to become the youngest starter in the history of the ADAC GT Masters. At 16 years and 31 days, the young man from the Westerwald region of Germany replaces Cologne's Jusuf Owega, who was 16 years, four months and 28 days old when he contested his first race. He shares the driving duties in a Mercedes-AMG GT3 run by Landgraf Motorsport with last year's champion Elias Seppänen. Kalendar is relaxed about the situation: "So far I have always been one of the youngest in the field, so I am pretty chilled out about it. The tests in the run-up to the season went smoothly and I have a strong driver alongside me in Elias."

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