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### HCB-Rutronik Racing: Newcomers create a stir in the ADAC GT Masters

- New outfit heads drivers' and team standings
- Maiden win in only their third Super Sports Car League race
- Ex-Le Mans winner Manuel Reuter is providing back-up and support for the team led by its Principal, Fabian Plentz

Munich: They are currently the top team in the ADAC GT Masters. Newcomers HCB-Rutronik Racing head the driver's standings in the Super Sports Car League with Patric Niederhauser (27, CH) and Kelvin van der Linde (22, ZA) after the first two race weekends. We take a look behind the scenes of the outfit based in Remchingen near Karlsruhe, who also top the team rankings after four of this season's 14 races.

HCB Rutronik Racing made a brilliant start to the season at the opener in Oschersleben towards the end of April. Niederhauser and van der Linde finished second on the podium as the team had their first competitive outing in the ADAC GT Masters. The outfit did even better just three weeks later at Autodrom Most when Niederhauser took their first pole position. The Swiss driver and his South African partner subsequently converted pole into a win for the team from Baden-Württemberg. "Well, yes, our goal was to secure a podium at some point during the season," said Team Principal Plentz. "But we never expected to finish on top at only the second race weekend in the series, as the ADAC GT Masters is one of the most hotly contested GT3 series in the world. Our success was therefore very special. Of course, we also had a dose of luck. That played its part."

The fact that HCB-Rutronik Racing had ambitious plans for the Super Sports Car League became apparent barely two years ago when they first planned to sign up to the series but had to postpone the decision. "Our objective has always been to establish ourselves in professional motor racing alongside our activities in classic amateur racing where we provide support and back-up for a number of drivers. However, we've always been clear about this, we did not want to rush things but only sign up if conditions were right. We made our first attempt to join the ADAC GT Masters at the end of 2017, but it quickly became clear in the initial round of talks that it would not be possible to start as planned, so we put the whole project on ice until a later date. The reason was that we wanted to compete at a high level right from the beginning and not just be also-rans."

Nothing stood in their way in 2019. The four drivers for the team's two Audi R8 LMS supercars, Niederhauser, van der Linde, plus Dennis Marschall (22, GER) and Carrie Schreiner (20, GER, both HCB-Rutronik Racing) were put under contract at an early stage. "I've known Kelvin since 2013 when he first came to Europe from South Africa," said Plentz. "At the time, I was servicing his car in the Volkswagen Scirocco R-Cup. He has raced for us during the past few years at meetings and on test days, and the desire to race together grew out of that. It's great to be working together now. We were in constant contact as regards selecting the other drivers, because I thought it is important not just to have really strong pairings but also to have people that get on. We've hit the bull's-eye with Patric Niederhauser as Kelvin's teammate." But Plentz also thinks highly of his second driver crew: "Carrie Schreiner lined up for us in 2018 in a different race series. We signed her early on. The plan is for her to grow with us. However, we'd been looking for someone with more experience, who could support her as a kind of mentor and bring her along. Dennis Marschall is exactly the right person. He's making a fine job of that and has a lot to do with Carrie. I hope that their form continues to improve as we saw quite recently at Most where they took their first point."

## MEDIA INFORMATION

Ex-Le Mans winner and ITC Champion Manuel Reuter is also a key player at HCB-Rutronik Racing and attends every race. “Manuel serves two important functions,” said Plentz, who has been Team Principal at HCB-Rutronik Racing since 2017. “He’s a brand ambassador for the automotive sector of our main sponsor Rutronik and is also very much involved with the team. You could say that Manuel and I currently lead the team jointly. We work closely together in areas such as technology, drivers and strategy and complement one another perfectly. Our relationship works very well on a professional level and we get on great as people. The whole team benefits from his immense experience, because he has competed as a driver at the highest level for a very long time.”

The outfit is based in Remchingen between Karlsruhe and Pforzheim. Their modern, 4,000-square metre headquarters has a range of facilities, including a workshop for the racing cars, among them, no less than ten Audi GT3s, the spare parts warehouse and a simulator. The racing team was set up in 2010 by Hans-Christoph Behler under the name HCB Management GmbH. His initials make up the outfit’s name. The racing team has been supported since its inception by electronics manufacturer Rutronik, who have provided sponsorship since 2015.

How do they expect to do over the rest of the season? “We are still building our team,” said Plentz. “We’ve still got plenty to learn. On the other hand, we are already competitive and of course, want to stay that way, but some tough races are sure to come our way. Also, some of the circuits will be new to us like Zandvoort and the Sachsenring. However, we will continue to work in a focused manner and try to do our best. Still, it would be really nice if we could continue to surprise people.”

### ADAC GT Masters race calendar for 2019

26/04/19 – 28/04/19	Motorsport Arena Oschersleben
17/05/19 – 19/05/19	Most (CZ)
07/06/19 – 09/06/19	Red Bull Ring (A)
09/08/19 – 11/08/19	Circuit Zandvoort (NL)
16/08/19 – 18/08/19	Nürburgring
13/09/19 – 15/09/19	Hockenheimring Baden-Württemberg
27/09/19 – 29/09/19	Sachsenring

### Media Contact

#### ADAC e.V.

Oliver Runschke, Tel: +49 (0) 89 7676 6965, E-Mail: [oliver.runschke@adac.de](mailto:oliver.runschke@adac.de)  
 Kay-Oliver Langendorff, Tel: +49 (0) 89 7676 6936, E-Mail: [kay.langendorff@adac.de](mailto:kay.langendorff@adac.de)

[adac.de/gt-masters](http://adac.de/gt-masters)  
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