

First match ball for Patric Niederhauser and Kelvin van der Linde at Hockenheim

- Opportunity for Audi duo to clinch ADAC GT Masters title early
- Corvette pairing of Kirchhöfer and Pommer in P2 aiming to keep the title race open in their home race
- Other drivers still in with outside chance of winning the championship

Munich: The penultimate weekend (13th - 15th September) of the ADAC GT Masters could prove decisive in the battle for the 2019 title. Audi drivers Patric Niederhauser (27, CH) and Kelvin van der Linde (23, ZA, both HCB-Rutronik Racing) will be arriving at Hockenheim for the sixth of seven events on the calendar with a championship lead of 40 points. But with 100 points still up for grabs, their Corvette, Audi and Lamborghini opponents will be equally determined to postpone the outcome to the final weekend at the Sachsenring. SPORT1 will be showing the two races live and in full length. The first starts at 14:45 CEST on Saturday, while the Sunday race gets underway at the earlier time of 13:05 CEST. Both races will additionally be streamed live by the online services of sport1.de, adac.de/motorsport and youtube.com/adac.

Key facts Hockenheimring, Hockenheim, Rounds 11 and 12 of 14

Length of track: 4,574 metres

Layout: 17 turns (nine right-handers, eight left-handers), driven clockwise

Winners in 2018, Race 1: Marvin Kirchhöfer and Daniel Keilwitz (Callaway Competition, Corvette C7 GT3-R)

Winners in 2018, Race 2: Sheldon van der Linde and Kelvin van der Linde (Montaplast by Land-Motorsport, Audi R8 LMS)

ADAC GT Masters at Hockenheim on TV: Both races (Saturday and Sunday) will be broadcast live on SPORT1. For further details about TV transmission times, see attachment.

Current championship leaders Niederhauser and van der Linde have 144 points to their account, a margin of 40 points over their closest pursuers. If the Audi pairing can extend that cushion to at least 51 points at Hockenheim, the championship is in the bag. While for Niederhauser it would be a first title in the Super Sports Car League, it would be the second time for his team-mate, van der Linde. In 2014, the South African partnered by DTM star René Rast became the youngest driver (then aged only 18) to win the ADAC GT Masters. "There are only four races left and Kelvin and I have a decent lead in the championship," said Niederhauser. "But although we could wrap up the title at the Hockenheimring, we could just as easily lose our lead. That's why it's important for us to take every session, every quali and every race very seriously, to retain our focus and to get the maximum out of the car. We know that it will be difficult, because the Corvettes in particular will be very strong. But if we do our job, two Top Five finishes should be achievable."

Chief among the aforementioned Corvette crews are Markus Pommer (28, GER) and Marvin Kirchhöfer (25, GER) who drive for Callaway Competition, a team based in Leingarten (Baden-Württemberg). Having won three of the races during the current season and on a points total of 104, Pommer and Kirchhöfer are the main challengers to Niederhauser and van der Linde in the title chase. Despite the 40-point deficit, the Corvette duo still rate their chances. The tremendous fighting spirit of Pommer and Kirchhöfer was on display most recently at the Nürburgring where they had to start from way back on the grid after two mediocre qualifying sessions, but by virtue of two strong charges through the field, they made up a total of 30 positions to keep their title chances alive. "We

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will do everything we can to reduce the points deficit,” says local favourite Pommer, who lives only 60 kilometres from Hockenheim in Neckarsulm. “We want to stay in the title race and therefore cannot allow ourselves to make any mistakes. We’ll keep fighting to the end, because a lot can happen in motor racing. I discovered that to my chagrin last year when Maximilian Götz and I led the championship but missed out on the title after three finishes outside the points in the last four races. Hockenheim is our home track, and it suits our car. We have already tested there and should have everything already sorted out. Furthermore, Marvin and Callaway won there last year, so I’m feeling confident.”

Max Hofer (20, AUT) and Christopher Mies (30, GER, both Montaplast by Land-Motorsport) are currently in third place on 97 points. Hofer also leads the Pirelli Junior classification for young drivers. These two Audi drivers have not yet given up the title fight, but have a realistic appreciation of their chances. “Under normal circumstances, there would not be much hope of winning the title,” says Mies. “But nothing is impossible. Anyway, that’s what the past few years have shown.” He and partner Hofer are still without a win in 2019, but they have at least consistently finished in the points. “We’re going about it in a matter-of-fact way. Our team does a good job and we’ve consistently been among the front-runners. It’s about scoring as many points as possible, because we’re determined to be in the Top Three of the championship at the end of the season. That’s why I hope you’ll be seeing us on the podium several times in the remaining races.”

The other main prospects for the win at Hockenheim include the three Lamborghini Huracán GT3 Evos fielded by Orange1 by GRT Grasser. The Austrian outfit, who won twice at the Nürburgring to take over at the top of the team championship, is led by two-time race winners Christian Engelhart (32, GER) and Mirko Bortolotti (29, ITA) who are currently fourth in the drivers’ championship. The German-Italian duo are on 92 points, three more than their fifth-placed team-mates Rolf Ineichen (41, CH) and Franck Perera (35, FRA, both Orange1 by GRT Grasser). In P6 are David Jahn (28, GER) and Sven Barth (38, GER, both RWT Racing) in the second of the two Corvette C7 GT3-Rs contesting the 2019 ADAC GT Masters. Veteran Barth could clinch the Pirelli Trophy for non-pro drivers at Hockenheim.

Also hoping for a good result at Hockenheim is Jens Klingmann from nearby Heidelberg. Together with MRS GT Racing co-driver Nicolai Sylvest, he won the Saturday race at the Red Bull Ring in June and will be intent on repeating that success in his home race, not least because the BMW M6 GT3 has consistently been in contention for the podium at Hockenheim in recent years. “In any case, the track should suit our car,” said the 29-year-old.

A comprehensive programme of motor racing awaits the spectators at Hockenheim. It includes the new ADAC GT4 Germany, the ADAC TCR Germany, the ADAC Formula 4 series for upcoming juniors and the spectacular Porsche Carrera Cup Germany. During the pit walk (Saturday 12:30 - 13:00 and Sunday 10:05 - 10:35), the public can also get a glimpse behind the scenes of the ADAC GT Masters in the pit lane. Autograph collectors can look forward to the Meet the Drivers session (Saturday 17:30 - 18:00) in front of ADAC hospitality suite.

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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 (AUT)
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

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

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