

23/12/2020 – No 108 – ADAC GT Masters

Q&A session with the two champions: Interview with Michael Ammermüller and Christian Engelhart

- Porsche drivers review their very successful year in the ADAC GT Masters
- SSR Performance drivers reveal what title win means to them

Munich: In a major interview, the new ADAC GT Masters champions Michael Ammermüller (34, GER) and Christian Engelhart (33, GER, both SSR Performance) look back on their championship-winning year. The two Porsche drivers talk about the highlights of their season, about what qualities they admire in one another and what clinching the title was like for them personally.

Mister Ammermüller, Mister Engelhart, how are you finding life as ADAC GT Masters champions?

Christian Engelhart: “Winning the ADAC GT Masters title has always been one of my big goals, you know. I’ve won lots of races previously in the series and was championship runner-up last year, so to have now finally lifted the title for Porsche along with Michael makes me feel extremely proud! And I’m going to work hard to defend it.”

Michael Ammermüller: “And it makes me feel proud too to have helped a new, young team get established so quickly.”

When did you first realise that you had pulled it off?

Ammermüller: “I knew as we crossed the finish line: Well, that’s it, job done. Mission accomplished! I was ecstatic after that.”

Engelhart: “As we were standing on the podium, holding up the trophy.”

You probably received many messages of congratulation after clinching the title. Which ones pleased or surprised you the most?

Ammermüller: “There was no need for any words. The look on the faces of the guys in the team was the best reward.”

Engelhart: “Every single message I received made me happy, and of course, I was really pleased too for my mechanics and engineers. After all, we did it together! I was also particularly touched to receive a note of congratulations from my former Team Principal, Gottfried Grasser.”

Thinking about the final race at Oschersleben, what was that title-deciding round on Sunday like for you?

Ammermüller: “There were some anxious moments at the start of the last race when another car made our Porsche spin. My first thought was, I hope nothing has got broken. When you consider what might have happened in Sunday’s final round, I have to honestly say that we were extremely lucky in the early stages and were able to re-start the race from our regular position.”

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Engelhart: “Being put into a spin as the final round got underway caused my adrenaline to spike momentarily, but our Porsche is really solid and nothing on the car that really mattered got broken.”

What makes you more nervous? Being in the car or in the pits?

Engelhart: “Being in the pits. I knew we could rely on Michael to secure the win, but nevertheless, the laps leading up to the finish line seemed to take ages...”

Ammermüller: “I never have time to get nervous in the car, as I’m always fully focused on driving.”

Were you relieved to have finally done it?

Ammermüller: “The season had gone really well up until then, and winning the title put the icing on the cake for me and gave me a huge feeling of satisfaction, knowing that all our hard work was being rewarded.”

Engelhart: “Towards the end, all sorts of thoughts about what could still go wrong flash through your mind, so the feeling of relief after we’d crossed the line was tremendous, for sure.”

How important is winning the title for you personally?

Engelhart: “In every year since 2012, I’ve always managed to finish among the Top Three in various championships. Everything has to go just right in order to win the title, and you have to be consistent as well. After taking European titles in the 2017 Blancpain Series, my dream of winning the ADAC GT Masters has also now been realised, but that won’t change my approach, because my goal is to continue on my winning streak.”

Ammermüller: “This title win will always have a special place in my career, as we were able to become champions with a new outfit in their very first year.”

Not only did you become champions, but you also secured the most wins, three in all. What was the secret behind your success?

Engelhart: “The way everyone in the team stuck together was a very important factor. Every individual in the team played their part and trusted each other implicitly. We were all able to rely on one another completely throughout the season.”

With the benefit of hindsight, were there any key moments during the season that played an important, decisive role in your fight for the title?

Engelhart: “As far as I’m concerned, there was no single key moment. In all of the many years that the ADAC GT Masters has been in existence, I think that this year’s fight for the title was the closest ever. Being bang on target in the finale was crucial, and we succeeded.”

Ammermüller: “We never gave up, even when things didn’t go our way in practice, and we scored points in every race apart from one.”

When did you first believe that you could win the drivers’ title?

Ammermüller: “I first got the feeling that we could succeed on the way to Oschersleben for the finale.”

Engelhart: “After winning the first race at the finale, I said to myself: Right, let’s do it.”

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You have known each other for many years now but were often opponents and never team-mates before the start of this season, so how would you describe your partner? What makes him stand out?

Ammermüller: “Christian is an incredibly positive person and really quick.”

Engelhart: “Michael never loses the overview thanks to his great experience and is especially strong when going wheel-to-wheel.”

Your outfit, SSR Performance, contested its first full year in the ADAC GT Masters in 2020. Did you expect to have such a strong season right away?

Ammermüller: “Well, I knew we had the right people on board and that I had a speedy team-mate in Christian but never expected things to go so well straightaway in our very first year.”

Engelhart: “I hoped that we might be contenders in the leading group. I always do my best and tried to use my experience to our advantage, but being able to do anything so soon in terms of the title was completely unforeseen.”

Thinking about past events, who would you say was your toughest opponent in the title fight?

Ammermüller: “It’s difficult to single out any one team in particular. There’s such a wide variety of top contenders in the ADAC GT Masters.”

Engelhart: “Well, I would say that there are some great teams definitely worth mentioning, for example, Precote Herberth Motorsport, Toksport WRT and Rutronik Racing. They were in the frame, battling us for the title right up until the last race! It’s what made it so exciting – eight drivers from three different brands, all with a chance of lifting the title in the very last race!”

Some teams give their racing cars nicknames. Does your championship-winning car perhaps have one?

Engelhart: “Well, no. It’s a Porsche through and through. It couldn’t have a better name.”

Looking ahead to the 2021 season, can you tell us at this stage how it will go? So far, nobody has ever managed to defend their title in the ADAC GT Masters. Are you up for the challenge?

Ammermüller: “Yes, I would love it, but let’s wait and see what the next few weeks bring.”

Engelhart: “As you will appreciate, it’s a bit too early to say, because nothing has been decided yet, but I’m definitely planning to contest the 2021 ADAC GT Masters as a driver. I would like to add more wins to my total of 15 to date, but then, there are others apart from me who think that the Super Sports Car League just has to be the most attractive series around in GT3 motor racing.”

Media information



Calendar for the 2021 ADAC GT Masters (subject to confirmation)

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| 14/05/21 - 16/05/2021 | Motorsport Arena Oschersleben |
| 11/06/21 - 13/06/2021 | Red Bull Ring (AUT) |
| 09/07/21 - 11/07/2021 | CM.com Circuit Zandvoort (NL) |
| 06/08/21 - 08/08/2021 | Nürburgring |
| 10/09/21 - 12/09/2021 | DEKRA Lausitzring |
| 01/10/21 - 03/10/2021 | Sachsenring |
| 22/10/21 - 24/10/2021 | Hockenheimring Baden-Württemberg |

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