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Audi fastest as ADAC GT Masters gets underway in Zandvoort

- Switzerland's Patric Niederhauser tops timesheets in FP1
- New surface a significant boost to lap times
- Both races (Saturday and Sunday) to be shown live and in full on SPORT1

Zandvoort: Audi driver Patric Niederhauser (25, CH, Aust Motorsport) set the fastest time in the first free practice session of the ADAC GT Masters race weekend at Zandvoort. The Swiss finished FP1 ahead of the two Lamborghini Huracáns entered by GRT Grasser Racing. The two races on the circuit set amid the North Sea dunes will be shown live and in full on Saturday (from 1.30pm) and on Sunday (from 1pm) by free-to-air TV channel SPORT1. They can also be watched as a live stream on www.adac.de/motorsport and www.sport1.de.

Niederhauser set a best time of 1.36.18 minutes. His lap was 1.5 seconds faster than the current ADAC GT Masters qualifying record, due at least in part to the resurfacing that the track has recently undergone. "It would be hard to imagine a better start to the weekend," said Niederhauser. "The car felt very good. This is my first race weekend here in Zandvoort. I like the track very much. It suits me and also the Audi R8 LMS. The new tarmac offers a lot of grip."

The two Lamborghini Huracáns entered by GRT Grasser Racing came second and third. Ezequiel Perez Companc (23, RA) and Mirko Bortolotti (27, ITA) were only 0.008 seconds off the top time. Their team-mates Rolf Ineichen (39, CH) and Christian Engelhart (30, DEU) meanwhile posted a lap time of 1.36.552 minutes. Rounding off the Top Five were Filip Salaquarda (33, CZ) and Markus Winkelhock (37, DEU, both BWT Mücke Motorsport) in another Audi R8 LMS ahead of Sebastian Asch (31, DEU) and Stefan Mücke (35, DEU) in a Mercedes-AMG also entered by Peter Mücke's outfit.

Championship leader Jules Gounon (22, FRA) and new team-mate Renger van der Zande (31, NL, both Callaway Competition) stepping in for the injured Daniel Keilwitz (27, DEU) at Zandvoort finished the session in seventh place.

Weekend starts at a beach club

The race weekend at Zandvoort got underway with the media kick-off at Bernies Beach Club on Thursday afternoon. In attendance at the press event were the three Dutch ADAC GT Masters drivers Nicky Catsburg (29, NL, BMW Team Schnitzer), Indy Dontje (24, NL, Mercedes-AMG Team HTP Motorsport) and Renger van der Zande (31, NL, Callaway Competition), as well as contestants from the ADAC TCR Germany series and Prince Bernhard van Oranje who owns the Zandvoort circuit.

New ADAC GT Masters record?

With the first six races of the 2017 ADAC GT Masters having produced six different winners, the competition looks to be extremely tight this year, and the Super Sports Car League could well set a new record this weekend. In 2008, the first seven races had seven different winners. If the present run continues to Race 2 on Sunday, then a new record will have been set. The chances of this happening are quite strong, especially as Audi and Mercedes-AMG are yet to claim their first victory of the campaign, and they are two brands with respectable track records in the Dutch dunes.

MEDIA INFORMATION

Flying Finn

Lamborghini driver Emil Lindholm (21, FIN, ADAC NSA/Attempto Racing Team) made his debut in the Junior Rally World Championship (JWRC) in early July. This outing in Poland served as preparation for entry in the World Rally Championship which is due to take place next weekend in his home country of Finland. Lindholm, who gained his first off-road experience in 2014 and 2015 in the ADAC Opel Rallye Cup, is related to the former rally world champion Marcus Grönholm.

24-hour winner at Goodwood

Reigning ADAC GT Masters Champion Connor De Phillippi (24, USA) together with co-drivers Christopher Mies (28, DEU), Kelvin van der Linde (20, ZA) and Markus Winkelhock (37, DEU) won the ADAC Zurich 24-hour race at the Nürburgring in late May. He has now been accorded the special honour of driving his race-winning Audi R8 LMS prepared by Audi Sport Team Land at the Goodwood Festival of Speed. This tradition-steeped event in the south of England is one of the world's most popular motorsport festivals for classic and modern racing cars.

Tickets for the race weekends are available online at www.adac.de/motorsport.

2017 ADAC GT Masters Calendar

28/04/17 - 30/04/17	Motorsport Arena Oschersleben
19/05/17 - 21/05/17	Lausitzring (with DTM)
09/06/17 - 11/06/17	Red Bull Ring, Austria
21/07/17 - 23/07/17	Circuit Zandvoort, Netherlands
04/08/17 - 06/08/17	Nürburgring
15/09/17 - 17/09/17	Sachsenring
22/09/17 - 24/09/17	Hockenheimring Baden-Württemberg

Further information at www.adac.de/gt-masters

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