

Porsche customer teams at the top at the DTM season opener in Oschersleben

28/05/2023 With four 911 GT3 R occupying the first four places at round two of the season on Sunday, Porsche's customer teams left their mark on the 2023 DTM opening weekend. The man of the weekend was series newcomer Tim Heinemann, who took the lead in the drivers' standings thanks to two second places. After the one-two result, the Toksport WRT squad ranks first in the team standings, with Porsche also at the top of the manufacturers' standings.

Driving for Toksport WRT, Christian Engelhart won Sunday's race at the opening weekend of the DTM in Oschersleben. Second place went to his teammate Tim Heinemann. The DTM newcomer turned heads at his debut when he clinched second place at race one on Saturday. Third place on Sunday went to polesitter Thomas Preining from the Manthey EMA team. Preining had held the lead for a long time, only to have a penalty lap due to a faulty pit stop thwart the Austrian from claiming victory. Driving the second "Grello" 911 fielded by the Nürburgring-based racing team, the Norwegian Dennis Olsen rounded off the leading Porsche quartet.

"That was an exciting race with the drivers from Toksport WRT and Manthey EMA driving an extremely fast and intelligent race," says Sebastian Golz, Project Manager 911 GT3 R, about Sunday's race. "After Saturday's race, all six drivers felt highly motivated because they saw what's possible with the Porsche 911 GT3 R here in Oschersleben. From the start of the second race they quickly agreed among themselves to give each other space to drive cleanly. As such, they were able to take an offensive approach, pushed to the end and were rewarded for it."

Polesitter Thomas Preining dominates over long stretches

With an advantage of a mere 0.05 seconds, Preining had secured pole position for Sunday's race in the morning's qualifying session ahead of former sim racer Heinemann. Three other 911 GT3 R drivers, Olsen, Ayhancan Güven and Engelhart, lined up on the grid in fifth, sixth and seventh places. Güven's Team75 Bernhard teammate Laurin Heinrich was the only Porsche driver outside the top 10 with P21.

At the start, Preining quickly pulled clear of his pursuers. Although two safety car phases before and after his pit stop bunched the field together, the Austrian kept his cool and quickly eked out a gap between himself and the rest of the field. However, with eight laps remaining, a minor breach of the rules due to the mechanics' handling of the tyres during the pit stop resulted in a penalty lap for the Manthey EMA driver. Losing around five seconds, Preining had to let the two Toksport WRT drivers overtake him.

Thanks to consistently fast laps and a late well-timed pit stop, Engelhart moved into the lead after working his way up the order – which included getting past his teammate Heinemann. Meanwhile, Laurin Heinrich made the greatest improvement in the 911 GT3 R fielded by Team75 Bernhard. The German steadily progressed from 21st on the grid to achieve ninth place after 41 laps. Bad luck plagued Ayhancan Güven this weekend: After retiring from Saturday's race, a technical problem ended the race for Team75 Bernhard's second driver on Sunday.

Inspired drive from Tim Heinemann on Saturday

Tim Heinemann tackled the first DTM race on Saturday afternoon from seventh on the grid. Putting in a cracking start, the German immediately made up two positions on lap one. According to the race director, his overtaking manoeuvre against Ferrari driver Jack Aitken shortly afterwards was a little too aggressive. As a result, he had to relinquish his fourth place to the ex-Formula 1 driver. "That was definitely not the smartest move," commented Heinemann. "But if you want to play with the big boys, you simply have to take risks." Ultimately, the Toksport WRT squad found the decisive pit stop opportunity to get their No. 9 car past Aitken and across the line in second place. Teammate Engelhart finished in ninth place.

Laurin Heinrich also celebrated his DTM debut on Saturday. Tackling the race from P9 on the grid, the Team75 Bernhard driver moved up to eighth place before his pit stop, squeezed past another rival during the tyre change and defended seventh place to the flag. His teammate Ayhancan Güven turned

heads with the fastest race lap. However, while running in tenth place, a technical defect threw him out of contention and he was classified 20th.

Like with his EMA teammate Olsen, Preining – the fastest Porsche driver in the morning's qualifying session with sixth place – also lost precious time in the race due to a fluffed pit stop. The two "Grello" drivers took the flag in positions ten (Olsen) and eleven (Preining).

Comments on the race weekend in Oschersleben

Christian Engelhart (Toksport WRT, Porsche 911 GT3 R #99): "What a brilliant Sunday for Porsche and a great race for Toksport WRT today. The fact that I managed to come from seventh to first place is something extraordinary! The key to success was a perfect strategy with fast laps followed by a very good pit stop. After that, I was able to defend my position until the tyres warmed up and the air pressure was right again. But all in all, a mega job from my team and I am also delighted for Porsche!"

Tim Heinemann (Toksport WRT, Porsche 911 GT3 R #9):"A fantastic weekend! Yesterday was incredible and we wanted to repeat that today. But we couldn't have imagined that it would work so well. For Porsche and especially for Toksport WRT, this is a huge success and a confirmation of the work that the team has done over the winter. I'm super happy with my performance and that I'm leaving Oschersleben as the championship leader – that still sounds a bit surreal to me. It's also a fantastic affirmation of the commitment of our mechanics."

Thomas Preining (Manthey EMA, Porsche 911 GT3 R #91): "It's hard to find the right words. I had the second race in my hands from the start. Everything ran smoothly and my pace was great. The Porsche drove really well. We made good progress throughout the weekend – I'm very proud of the team. I'll just put the penalty behind me. I still don't quite know what happened. After yesterday's race, we were able to come back strong today. This is exactly what we'll do in Zandvoort."

Laurin Heinrich (Team75 Bernhard, Porsche 911 GT3 R #75): "Essentially, I'm satisfied with Sunday's race. Given that overtaking isn't easy on this track, moving from 21st on the grid to ninth is good here at Oschersleben. I was unlucky in qualifying and so I had to make the best of the situation. I got off to a good start and immediately managed to gain two places. Our strategy worked and in the second half of the race, I could really attack with the fresh tyres. Before the race I never expected to make it into the top 10. Now we have to work on qualifying further up the grid next time."

Results

Result race 1:
1. Franck Perrera (F), Lamborghini Huracan GT3 EVO 2 #94, 44 laps
2. Tim Heinemann (D), Porsche 911 GT3 R #9, + 3.987 seconds
3. Jack Aitken (UK), Ferrari 296 GT3 #14, +8.077 seconds

7. Laurin Heinrich (D), Porsche 911 GT3 R #75, + 17.268 seconds
9. Christian Engelhart (D), Porsche 911 GT3 R #99, + 18.753 seconds
10. Dennis Olsen (N), Porsche 911 GT3 R #90, + 22.022 seconds
11. Thomas Preining (A), Porsche 911 GT3 R #91, + 22.601 seconds
20. Ayhancan Güven (TR), Porsche 911 GT3 R #24, + 4 laps

Result race 2:
1. Christian Engelhart (D), Porsche 911 GT3 R #99, 41 laps
2. Tim Heinemann (D), Porsche 911 GT3 R #9, + 0.872 seconds
3. Thomas Preining (A), Porsche 911 GT3 R #91, + 2.104 seconds
4. Dennis Olsen (N), Porsche 911 GT3 R #90, + 3.791 seconds
9. Laurin Heinrich (D), Porsche 911 GT3 R #75, + 8.898 seconds
DNF Ayhancan Güven (TR), Porsche 911 GT3 R #24, +12 laps

Drivers' classification after 2 of 16 races:
1. Tim Heinemann (D/Toksport WRT/Porsche), 42 points
2. Franck Perera (F/SSR Performance/Lamborghini), 32 points
3. Christian Engelhart (D/Toksport WRT/Porsche), 32 points
4. Thomas Preining (A/Manthey EMA/Porsche), 24 points
7. Dennis Olson (N/Manthey EMA/Porsche), 19 points
10. Laurin Heinrich (D/Team75 Bernhard/Porsche), 16 points

Team classification after 2 of 16 races:
1. Toksport WRT (Porsche), 72 points
2. SSR Performance (Lamborghini), 47 points
3. Manthey EMA (Porsche), 40 points
7. Team75 Bernhard (Porsche), 16 points

Manufacturers' classification after 2 of 16 races:
1. Porsche, 74 points
2. Lamborghini, 62 points
2. Audi, 38 points
3. Ferrari, 34 points
4. Mercedes-AMG, 32 points
5. BMW, 24 points

Preview

Three Porsche customer teams head into the 2023 DTM season this coming weekend (26 to 28 May) in Oschersleben. Manthey EMA, Team75 Bernhard and Toksport WRT each field two 992-generation 416 kW (565 hp) 911 GT3 R racing cars.

A total of 28 drivers will tackle the 16 races. Each of the eight racing weekends features two sprint events with the finale contested at the Hockenheimring. This year marks the first time that the GT3 racing series will be contested under the ADAC umbrella. Unlike other championships based on international GT3 regulations, the DTM continues to follow the policy of one car and one driver. Porsche supports its customer teams Manthey EMA, Team75 Bernhard and Toksport WRT with a parts service, extensive guidance from its performance engineers as well as with factory drivers and other racers from the extended Porsche squad.

The customer teams and their drivers

"We're heading into the 2023 DTM season with a very interesting driver line-up," states Sebastian Golz, Project Manager 911 GT3 R. "Our three partner teams Manthey EMA, Team75 Bernhard and Toksport WRT all have a wealth of experience and are among the heavyweights of the scene. They all follow very different approaches with their drivers – from the young guns at Team75 Bernhard and the seasoned specialists at Manthey EMA to the combination of both approaches at Toksport WRT. It'll be exciting to see which concept will ultimately prove to be the most promising."

Team75 Bernhard contests its second full DTM season in 2023. With Ayhancan Güven from Turkey and Germany's Laurin Heinrich, two former Porsche Juniors will compete for the team run by the two-time Le Mans outright winner and current Porsche brand ambassador Timo Bernhard. Güven, the 2019 Porsche Mobil 1 Supercup vice-champion, has already notched up DTM experience from his guest drives in 2022. Heinrich won the Porsche Carrera Cup Deutschland last year.

Newcomer Manthey EMA puts its trust in an experienced DTM crew. Last year, Thomas Preining drove for Team75 Bernhard. Thanks to his two race wins, the Austrian works driver remained a contender for the DTM title until the very last round of the season. His teammate is Dennis Olsen from Norway, who also contested the entire 2022 DTM season at the wheel of a Porsche – and achieved one race victory.

Team75 Bernhard

Toksport WRT also tackles the DTM for the first time and relies on a mix of experience and youth. Christian Engelhart from Germany contested two DTM races last year. He will play the role of mentor for youngster Tim Heinemann (Germany), who is climbing the career ladder into the GT3 series after winning two titles in the GT4-based DTM Trophy.

The 2023 DTM season

While the ADAC will run the DTM for the first time this year, very little will change in the general format of the popular series. Racing cars based on the FIA GT3 regulations will continue to be fielded. As usual, the calendar includes eight doubleheader events. Between the season opener next weekend in

Oschersleben and the traditional season finale in Hockenheim in October, the German racing series will make stops at the Norisring in Nuremberg, the Nürburgring, the Lausitzring and the Sachsenring. Moreover, the series travels beyond Germany's borders to Zandvoort in the Netherlands at the end of June and Spielberg, Austria, in September.

Manthey EMA

Each DTM race weekend features two free practices (45 to 60 minutes), two 20-minute qualifying sessions and two 60-minute races. In each race, a pit stop with a tyre change is mandatory.

In the DTM, the ADAC offers a driver, team and manufacturer classification. For the latter, the two best-placed vehicles of each manufacturer are taken into account for each race. The points' distribution follows the proven FIA formula (25-18-15-12-10-8-6-4-2-1). The three top qualifiers receive additional points towards the drivers' classification – with the fastest earning three points, and one point going to the third fastest. Following the same scheme, the three quickest mandatory pit stops per race count towards the "Pit Stop Challenge".

Toksport WRT

German DTM fans can watch all races live on the free TV station ProSieben.

Tyre regulations pose a special challenge

Fourteen teams, each with two drivers, have registered for the 2023 DTM season. Of the six brands represented, Porsche has the largest vehicle contingent with half a dozen nine-elevens. To ensure exciting and fair competition, the proven Balance of Performance (BoP) developed by the SRO Motorsport Group puts the various racing car models on a level playing field when it comes to performance. The DTM racing cars will run on control tyres from Pirelli. This combination of GT3 vehicles, SRO-BoP and Pirelli tyres is a tried-and-true formula from other series.
"While tyre warmers are permitted in the GT World Challenge Europe, for example, and no tyre changes are required in the ADAC GT Masters, the tyres in the DTM are not allowed to be preheated," says Sebastian Golz, outlining a special feature of the regulations. "At the start of the race and after switching tyres, the drivers have to then get the tyres up to temperature and within the optimal performance window. Not least because of the different drive concepts of the vehicles, it'll be interesting to see who does this best. Tyre management and pit stop strategy definitely play an important role in the DTM."

Penalty lap as a new way to crack down on minor infringements

A new feature of the DTM is the so-called penalty lap, which is already used in the ADAC GT Masters. In addition to drive-through and stop-and-go penalties, the stewards of the meeting have another sanction option for less serious violations of the rules. When handed a penalty lap, on the following lap, the affected driver must drive through the specially set up and specifically marked penalty zone on each circuit at a maximum speed of 50 km/h. The time lost as a result is expected to be around five seconds. To warn the drivers behind, the penalised party must activate the hazard warning lights at a defined point before starting the penalty lap.

Comments ahead of the race

Laurin Heinrich (Team75 Bernhard, Porsche 911 GT3 R #75): "I'm super excited about my debut weekend in the DTM, of course. The fact that this debut takes place in Oschersleben means a great deal to me – that's where I drove my first ever racing car and I also clinched my first victory in the Porsche Carrera Cup Deutschland there two years ago."

Thomas Preining (Manthey EMA, Porsche 911 GT3 R #91): "We're back racing at last. It's been seven months since the finale last season. Since then, the suspense has steadily growing. Because we managed to quickly establish the basic framework with the new team, we were able to start preparations early. I think it's paying off. My goal for the season is to be consistent from the start and to score points regularly."

Christian Engelhart (Toksport WRT, Porsche 911 GT3 R #99): "I can hardly wait to start the new DTM season with Toksport WRT. There's no doubt we're competing in a series with an extremely high level of competition. In the past few weeks, we've worked hard and prepared meticulously. Now it's a matter of pulling it all together. I like the Oschersleben racetrack. I have good memories of it. In 2020, I took home the ADAC GT Masters title in the Magdeburg region."

The schedule (all times CEST)

Friday, 26 May
12:15 pm – 1:00 pm: Free practice 1
4:15 pm – 5:00 pm: Free practice 2

Saturday, 27 May
9:15 am – 9:25 am: Qualifying 1
1:30 pm – 2:30 pm: Race 1

Sunday, 28 May

9:35 am – 9:55 am: Qualifying 2
1:30 pm – 2:30 pm: Race 2

Porsche customer teams contesting the 2023 DTM

Manthey EMA
#90 Dennis Olsen (Norway)
#91 Thomas Preining (Austria)

Team75 Bernhard
#24 Ayhancan Güven (Turkey)
#75 Laurin Heinrich (Germany)

Toksport WRT
#9 Tim Heinemann (Germany)
#99 Christian Engelhart (Germany)

The 2023 DTM calendar (with two races at each event)

26 – 28 May: Oschersleben (Germany)
23 – 25 June: Zandvoort (Netherlands)
7 – 9 July: Norisring (Germany)
4 – 6 August: Nürburgring (Germany)
18 – 20 August: Lausitzring (Germany)
8 – 10 September: Sachsenring (Germany)
22 – 24 September: Red Bull Ring (Austria)
20 – 22 October: Hockenheim (Germany)

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Path: Porsche customer teams at the top at the DTM season opener in Oschersleben/Images/img_1.jpg
Title: Tim Heinemann, Toksport WRT, 2023, Porsche AG
Subline: Tim Heinemann, Toksport WRT

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Title: Sebastian Golz, Projekt Manager Porsche 911 GT3 R, 2023, Porsche AG
Subline: Sebastian Golz

Path: Porsche customer teams at the top at the DTM season opener in Oschersleben/Images/img_3.jpg
Title: Laurin Heinrich (D), Team75 Bernhard (#75), 2023, Porsche AG
Subline: Laurin Heinrich

Path: Porsche customer teams at the top at the DTM season opener in Oschersleben/Images/img_4.jpg
Title: Thomas Preining (A), Manthey EMA (#91), 2023, Porsche AG
Subline: Thomas Preining

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