

Manthey EMA driver Thomas Preining is the new championship leader

25/06/2023 Works driver Thomas Preining has taken the lead in the DTM drivers' standings at Zandvoort in the Netherlands. The Austrian netted a total of 29 points from both races at the wheel of his 911 GT3 R fielded by the Manthey EMA team. Porsche driver Ayhancan Güven (Team75 Motorsport) also finished in the points at the two events. With this, both have played a major role in propelling Porsche to the top of the leaderboard in the manufacturers' standings. The previous leader Tim Heinemann (Toksport WRT) had to leave the Grand Prix circuit at the North Sea coast empty-handed after rounds three and four of the season.

Putting in a flawless drive in Sunday's race of the DTM weekend in Zandvoort, Manthey EMA driver Thomas Preining took the flag in second place. After securing seventh the previous day, the Austrian was once again the best Porsche 911 GT3 R driver. With this result, he earned enough points to move to the top of the points standings after four of 16 races. With Ayhancan Güven (Team75 Motorsport) in seventh and Preining's teammate Dennis Olsen in ninth, two other 911 drivers achieved a top-ten result

on Sunday. Christian Engelhart (Toksport WRT) finished 13th on Sunday and thus also collected points towards the championship. Aside from Preining, Güven was the only other Porsche driver who finished in the points on Saturday.

“We experienced a challenging weekend, but we were able to improve significantly from one day to the next thanks to the intensive work of everyone involved,” states Sebastian Golz, Project Manager 911 GT3 R. “Thomas Preining truly earned his place on the podium and after the first quarter of the season he should be delighted with his championship lead. Ayhancan Güven and Laurin Heinrich’s performances were also excellent: The young guns are finding their rhythm more and more.”

Unlucky Lauren Heinrich shunted out of both races through no fault of his own

Any praise was cold comfort to Laurin Heinrich: after starting from P20 on the grid, the 21-year-old was hit by a flying piece of carbon on the track during the opening lap of Saturday’s race. After just two laps he had to park his damaged race car. The Team75 Motorsport driver started Sunday’s race from the fifth grid spot and held his ground in the leading group for a considerable period. Shortly after his pit stop, however, a competitor sent him into a spin in the banked Hugenholzbucht corner. As a precautionary measure, his team decided to take him out of the race early.

Meanwhile, thanks to the fastest pit stop of the day, Preining was able to reclaim the second position he had lost at the start. With a gap of around two seconds to the front and two seconds to his closest pursuers, the 24-year-old brought home a commanding podium finish. Güven and Olsen also put in flawless drives over the entire race distance on Sunday. While the seventh-placed Turk improved by one place on his grid position, the Norwegian finished in the same place from which he had started.

The Toksport WRT duo Christian Engelhart and Tim Heinemann started Sunday’s race from positions twelve and 16. Both became entangled in numerous midfield duels right from the get-go. While Oschersleben winner Engelhart was able to limit the damage with three points for 13th place, Heinemann, who had travelled to Zandvoort as the leader of the standings, came away empty-handed in 17th.

Mixed start to the weekend for the Porsche customer teams

On Saturday, not much went right for the six Porsche drivers in qualifying: Only Preining, in tenth place, managed to make it into the top 10 on the grid for the third race of the season. Güven followed nine-thousandths of a second behind in eleventh place. Their best lap times were a good half-second above those of the pole setter. Instead of being focus on the track ahead, both were initially busy defending their positions in the opening stages of Saturday’s race.

Toksport WRT driver Heinemann proved to be one of the most active drivers in the opening laps, steadily working his way up the order from P22 on the grid. On lap 18, the German driver, who had arrived as the leader of the standings, pulled into the pits for his mandatory pit stop while running in fourth place. Due to a stubborn tyre, however, this took a little longer than planned. The trip to the pit

lane was even more unfortunate for Oschersleben winner Engelhart: problems with a centre-lock nut led to a stop of almost 20 seconds plus the additional disadvantage of a penalty lap. After closing the pit stop window, Preining found himself in seventh place as the best Porsche driver, a position he was able to defend to the finish. Güven was rewarded with his first three championship points of the season in 13th place. Olsen (16th), Heinemann (19th) and Engelhart (23rd), on the other hand, walked away from Saturday's race empty-handed.

Quotes from the race weekend in Zandvoort

Thomas Preining (Manthey EMA, Porsche 911 GT3 R #91): "We got a bit more than the maximum out of today. My Porsche 911 GT3 R was already performing beautifully in qualifying. In the race, I was able to hold my own in the leading pack. Just like Saturday, our strategy proved to be world-class today. On top of that, my team did a fantastic job, completing the fastest pit stop of the race. That's how you maximize your chances. It's important to score points regularly. That's how we want to continue."

Ayhancan Güven (Team75 Motorsport, Porsche 911 GT3 R #24): "My first championship points on Saturday gave me the confidence to really attack in Sunday's race. After getting caught up a bit at the start and initially losing a place, I was determined to make up ground. My team's great work during the pit stop contributed massively. I was able to up my pace compared to the season opener and, thanks to my perfectly functioning 911 GT3 R, defend my position in the final phase against the rivals pressuring me from behind."

Christian Engelhart (Toksport WRT, Porsche 911 GT3 R #99): "A difficult weekend came to a conciliatory end for us today. Unfortunately, I lost a few positions in the scramble at the start but was then able to work my way back up the order after the pit stop and score valuable points."

Results

Results race 3:
1. Maro Engel (D), Mercedes-AMG GT3 #48, 39 laps
2. Sheldon van der Linde (RSA), BMW M4 GT3 #1, + 6.000 seconds
3. Franck Perera (F), Lamborghini Huracan GT3 EVO 2 #94, + 6.528 seconds
7. Thomas Preining (A), Porsche 911 GT3 R #91, + 12.196 seconds
13. Ayhancan Güven (TR), Porsche 911 GT3 R #24, + 30.318 seconds
16. Dennis Olsen (N), Porsche 911 GT3 R #90, + 32.798 seconds
19. Tim Heinemann (D), Porsche 911 GT3 R #9, + 34.955 seconds
23. Christian Engelhart (D), Porsche 911 GT3 R #99, + 1:02.474 minutes
DNF Laurin Heinrich (D), Porsche 911 GT3 R #75, + 37 laps

Results race 4:
1. Ricardo Feller (CH), Audi R8 LMS GT3 EVO II #7, 39 laps

2. Thomas Preining (A), Porsche 911 GT3 R #91, + 2.719 seconds
3. Luca Stolz (D), Mercedes-AMG GT3 #4, + 6.540 seconds
7. Ayhancan Güven (TR), Porsche 911 GT3 R #24, + 15.592 seconds
9. Dennis Olsen (N), Porsche 911 GT3 R #90, + 16.987 seconds
12. Christian Engelhart (D), Porsche 911 GT3 R #99, + 26.555 seconds
17. Tim Heinemann (D), Porsche 911 GT3 R #9, + 46.543 seconds
DNF Laurin Heinrich (D), Porsche 911 GT3 R #75, + 21 laps

Drivers' classification after 4 of 16 races:
1. Thomas Preining (A/Manthey EMA/Porsche), 55 points
2. Ricardo Feller (CH/Team Abt Sportsline/Audi), 51 points
3. Franck Perera (F/SSR Performance/Lamborghini), 51 points
5. Tim Heinemann (D/Toksport WRT/Porsche), 42 points
7. Christian Engelhart (D/Toksport WRT/Porsche), 36 points
9. Dennis Olson (N/Manthey EMA/Porsche), 26 points
14. Laurin Heinrich (D/Team75 Bernhard/Porsche), 16 points
18. Ayhancan Güven (TR/ Team75 Motorsport/Porsche), 12 points

Team classification after 4 of 16 races:
1. SSR Performance (Lamborghini), 84 points
2. Toksport WRT (Porsche), 76 points
3. Manthey EMA (Porsche), 76 points
7. Team75 Motorsport (Porsche), 28 points

Manufacturers' classification after 4 of 16 races:
1. Porsche, 118 points
2. Lamborghini, 104 points
3. Mercedes-AMG, 94 points
4. Audi, 85 points
5. BMW, 76 points
6. Ferrari, 42 points

Full results

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