**Victory for Robert Wickens at first race in Zandvoort**

**On Saturday, Robert Wickens won the first race of the DTM weekend in Zandvoort to mark the halfway point of the season in what is probably the most popular international touring car series. The Mercedes-Benz driver started from pole position and defended his lead to the finish. After 25 laps, Marco Wittmann (BMW) finished behind him in second place. The race tyre from premium tyre partner Hankook once again delivered outstanding performance on the 4.307-kilometre circuit. The *Ventus Race* provided the usual high level of grip, despite the challenges posed by the rough asphalt, the uneven surface and the sand blown on to the track from the nearby North Sea.**

***Zandvoort/Netherlands, 16th July 2016*** – Robert Wickens ensured that his strong performance in qualifying was repeated in Saturday’s race as he started from pole position on the dune circuit in Zandvoort. The Mercedes-Benz driver defended his lead at the start and remained ahead throughout the race. Marco Wittmann (BMW) reached the chequered flag in second place behind the Canadian. The DTM champion of 2014 increased his lead in the drivers’ standings to ten points and remains ahead of Wickens, who moved up to second place overall after his fifth win in the DTM.

Third and fourth positions were claimed by Christian Vietoris and Gary Paffett, who both also drive for the carmaker from Stuttgart, while the best-placed Audi driver was Jamie Green in fifth. The British driver improved to fourth in the overall standings and is now behind his brand team-mate Edoardo Mortara, who finished in 17th position after a drive-through penalty.

“After nine races, we are at the halfway point in the DTM season and we have already had eight different winners. That shows how evenly-matched the teams are in this extraordinary touring car series. Our Hankook race tyres delivered top performance under challenging conditions in Zandvoort, just as they have done throughout the 2016 season so far. The second half of the DTM season starts at the dune circuit on Sunday. The battle for the championship is wide open and we are looking forward to a thrilling race,” says Manfred Sandbichler, Hankook Motorsport Director Europe.

**Robert Wickens (Mercedes-Benz):** “The win was more difficult than it may have looked. In Zandvoort, you always have to watch out for the sand. The racing line is clear but if you don’t hit that line, that can mean trouble. The Hankook race tyre worked perfectly and there was much less wear than we expected. We could post consistently fast lap times right to the finish, thanks to the very good balance of the car.”

**Marco Wittmann (BMW):** “I didn’t think the sand was as much of a problem as the bits of carbon that were left on the start-finish straight after the events at the start of the race. However, the Hankook tyre dealt with that, with no problems. I had to pay attention behind me after the slow zone but I was able to defend my second place.”

**Christian Vietoris (Mercedes-Benz):** “Our good performances in qualifying have finally been rewarded. It’s a shame that I wasn’t able to overtake Marco Wittmann. I was faster through the bends, while he had the advantage on the straights. Everything worked fine with the Hankook race tyre.”

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