**René Rast on brink of second DTM title**

**after victory at the Nürburgring**

**René Rast claimed a commanding victory in Saturday’s DTM race at the Nürburgring. In doing so, he extended his lead in the Drivers’ Championship to 47 points. The Audi driver was first across the finish line after 41 laps of racing. This result in the Eifel Mountains means Rast could be crowned champion for the second time in arguably the most popular international touring car series on Sunday. In wonderful weather and with track temperatures as high as 35 degrees, the Ventus Race supplied by tyre maker Hankook produced its customary strong performance, allowing all the drivers to pursue individual race strategies. With its high degree of consistency, the race tyre also made long stints possible.**

***Nürburgring/Germany, 14th September 2019*** – René Rast started the 15th DTM race of the season from pole position on Saturday, and successfully defended his lead when the lights went out. The Audi racer controlled the field from the word go, coming into the pits for his mandatory stop on lap 16, before continuing to extend his lead on the second set of Hankook race tyres. After 41 laps, the 32-year-old crossed the finish line 10.7 seconds clear of his closest rivals to claim win number six of the season and his third DTM victory in a row at the Nürburgring.

Second place went to Bruno Spengler (BMW), who benefitted from the retirement of Audi driver Mike Rockenfeller, who was running second when he was forced to stop with technical issues on lap 26. Marco Wittmann produced a magnificent fightback. The BMW driver started the race from eleventh place on the grid, but fought back brilliantly to claim the third spot on the podium. However, the two-time DTM champion now trails championship leader Rast by 80 points, leaving him little more than a mathematical chance of claiming title number three.

The big loser on the penultimate race Saturday of the DTM season was Nico Müller (Audi). The Swiss qualified third fastest, but a false start resulted in a drive-through penalty and a lowly 16th place. Whilst Müller still lies second overall, he is now 47 points behind championship leader Rast, who needs to score just nine points more than his fellow Audi driver on Sunday to wrap up his second DTM title before the finale in Hockenheim.

Manfred Sandbichler, Hankook Motorsport Director Europe: “René Rast drove flawlessly in qualifying and in the race. After the false start by his closest rival, Nico Müller, who failed to pick up any points, he is now the hot favourite for the title. BMW improved significantly after free practice and was rewarded with second and third place. Marco Wittmann’s fightback from eleventh place to finish on the podium was particularly impressive. Aston Martin is also gaining momentum all the time. The spectators have been treated to great motorsport so far at the Nürburgring. There have been a lot of spectacular battles, and the DTM rookies in particular have taken no prisoners. I am intrigued to see whether René Rast can wrap up his second DTM title on Hankook race tyres on Sunday.”

**René Rast (Audi):** “The Hankook race tyres were mega good in the first stint. In the second section, there was more grip on the track, so you had to manage the tyres correctly. Generally speaking, the Hankook race tyre was excellent in qualifying and in the race.”

**Bruno Spengler (BMW):** “The Hankook race tyres only showed minor signs of wear, even in the warm temperatures. You could push hard and set fast lap times on them throughout the entire race. That allowed me to claim second place without any issues.”

**Marco Wittmann (BMW):** “I am happy with my pace and third place. We were on used Hankook race tyres in both stints, while the competition was predominantly on fresh tyres. That shows how well the Hankook race tyres held up and, above all, that we were very quick on them. That gives me hope ahead of Sunday.”

|  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- |
| **Contact:**  **Hankook Tire Europe GmbH |** Corporate Communications Europe/CIS **|** Siemensstr. 14, 63263 Neu-Isenburg **|** Germany | | | |
| **Felix Kinzer**  Director  Tel.: +49 (0) 61 02 8149 – 170  f.kinzer@hankookreifen.de | **Yara Willems**  PR Specialist  Tel.: +49 (0) 6102 8149 – 172  y.willems@hankookreifen.de |  |  |