**Hankook race tyres head for the great DTM finale at the Hockenheimring**

**As is tradition, premium tyre maker Hankook and the DTM are at the Hockenheimring this weekend for the grand finale of the 2017 season. The iconic circuit in the Hardtwald forest, near Heidelberg, will host the final two races of the year, which will determine who is crowned 2017 DTM champion. Six drivers are mathematically still in the title race. However, championship leader Mattias Ekström (Audi) is definitely in pole position going into the final round of races. He leads fellow Audi driver René Rast by 21 points. The race tyre provided by exclusive DTM partner Hankook will, as it has done in all the races so far this season, offer the drivers optimal support as they battle for the title in what is probably the most popular international touring car series.**

***Hockenheim/Germany, 10th October 2017* –** The high-speed track in Hockenheim will once again place great demands on the Hankook race tyres at the season finale. Fast corners like the Parabolika put enormous strain on the tyre construction. However, the *Ventus Race* tyre has always passed this test with flying colours in the past. “Slightly higher tyre pressure, little camber and a set-up adapted specifically to the circumstances can reduce the strain on the race tyre at the Hockenheimring, which, together with the circuit in the dunes in Zandvoort, is one of the most demanding tracks on the tyres on the DTM calendar,” says Hankook DTM race engineer Thomas Baltes.

The uneven surface in Hockenheim can cause the cars to ‘bounce’, making it difficult for the drivers to find the right braking point, particularly at the key points before turn two and the hairpin. In principle, a lower tyre pressure would help to lessen the upward and downward movements of the cars. However, no adjustments should be too extreme, as these could have a negative effect on the construction, and with it the durability, of the race tyre when the cars travel over the high and sharp-edged kerbs at top speed.

The temperatures, which are usually low at this late point in the season, could also play an important role at the Hockenheimring, especially since the introduction at the start of the season of a new rule banning the pre-heating of the race tyres. Thomas Baltes: “It is crucial for the drivers to get their tyres up to working temperature during the warm-up process prior to the start of the race, in order to achieve the target air pressure as quickly as possible. Furthermore, the first few corners and changes in direction should be approached with great care. Otherwise, the battle for the DTM crown could be over prematurely for some of the drivers, as tyres have a memory.”

As well as the championship in what is probably the most popular international touring car series, the title is also up for grabs in the FIA Formula 3 European Championship this weekend. Probably the strongest single-seater series in the world for young drivers, Hankook has been supporting this series with the *Ventus Race* tyre since 2012. Clear favourite for the title is Great Britain’s Lando Norris. The Hockenheimring will also host the final round of the season in the Audi Sport TT Cup, which Hankook has also supplied with tyres since it was launched in 2015. The man in pole position to clinch the title in this series is Briton Philip Ellis.

While the title race remains exciting right down to the finish, we already have a winner in the Hankook Best Pit Stop Award ahead of the finale in Hockenheim. Fourth place in Spielberg with driver Mike Rockenfeller was enough for Audi Sport Team Phoenix to open an unassailable lead with 138 points. The rapid guys at the Phoenix team have won on three occasions to date, and have scored points in every race. Their Audi colleagues at Audi Sport Team Abt Sportsline are second with their driver Mattias Ekström. Maxime Martin and BMW Team RBM are third.

The Best Pit Stop Award allows Hankook to reward the work of those who are seldom in the spotlight, but who do a very important job for the team. The winning team receives the coveted crystal trophy at the end of the season. Hankook also organises an exclusive team event for the fastest crew.

This year’s DTM will draw to a spectacular close, thanks to music from the band “Die Fantastischen Vier”, the fantastic four.

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