**René Rast clinches the title on Hankook race tyres in the final race of his first DTM season**

**René Rast is the new DTM champion. The Audi driver finished second in Sunday’s final race of the season at the Hockenheimring. This result was enough to earn Rast the title in his first season in what is probably the most popular international touring car series. The DTM rookie leapfrogged ahead of fellow Audi drivers Jamie Green and Mattias Ekström in the Drivers’ Championship to claim the title with a three-point lead. As it has all season, the race tyre supplied by premium car maker Hankook once again produced a strong performance at the iconic circuit near Heidelberg, demonstrating impressive levels of grip and consistency.**

***Hockenheim/Germany, 15th October 2017* –** René Rast started the race from second place on the grid, but initially dropped back to fifth at the start. However, the Audi driver then consistently made up ground before coming in for a fresh set of the Hankook race tyres on lap 23. Rast went on to end the 36-lap race in second place behind his predecessor, 2016 DTM champion Marco Wittmann (BMW).

This result was enough for the DTM rookie to clinch the title, as Mattias Ekström and Jamie Green, who both came into the final race ahead of him in the Drivers’ Championship, could only finish eighth and fifth respectively in the final DTM race of the year, and ultimately ended the 2017 season behind Rast in second and third place.

Mike Rockenfeller (Audi) followed the new champion over the finish line in third place in Sunday’s race at the Hockenheimring. Best-placed Mercedes-Benz driver was Gary Paffett, who came home fourth. As such, the Ingolstadt-based car maker occupied the top four positions in the Drivers’ Championship with Rast, Ekström, Green and Rockenfeller. Marco Wittmann (BMW) followed in fifth place, ahead of Lucas Auer (Mercedes-Benz) in sixth.

Manfred Sandbichler, Hankook Motorsport Director Europe: “That was a great DTM finale, with a worthy champion. For a rookie, René Rast showed incredible nerves and fully deserves to be crowned 2017 champion. The fans have enjoyed a season full of exciting races, many overtaking manoeuvres and exciting battles, thanks in no small part to Hankook’s newly-developed *Ventus Race*. That was the kind of motorsport that everyone wants to see. It was impossible to predict and every race weekend was different, because the drivers and teams could adopt different strategies with the Hankook race tyre. I am already looking forward to the 2018 DTM season.”

Audi Sport Team Phoenix completed the fastest pit stop at the finale in Hockenheim, in a time of 28.146 seconds. They were rewarded for their efforts with 25 points towards the overall standings in the Hankook Best Pit Stop Award.

**René Rast (Audi):** “I cannot believe that I am the DTM champion. I have still yet to take it in. It was great fun to drive on the Hankook race tyre. However, it was also a big challenge to manage them, particularly when it was a little cooler, as we were not allowed to pre-heat them. It goes without saying, though, that it is up to the driver himself to manage the tyres. Everything worked superbly today. I was very happy with the Hankook race tyre all season.”

**Dieter Gass, Audi Head of Motorsport:** “It is crazy what René has achieved as a newcomer in such a strong field. I am thrilled with the way he produced such a serene performance. We worked together with Hankook this year to develop a new race tyre, which was not allowed to be pre-heated. It has been a very good product, but very challenging to manage. We understood the Hankook race tyre, which was intentionally developed to wear faster, very early on in proceedings, which was a big advantage for us. We could do very long stints on it, and that was one of the keys to our success.”

**Jens Marquardt, BMW Motorsport Director:** “The newly-developed Hankook race tyre, and the fact that it could not be pre-heated, made life tricky for the drivers. However, that was the intention, as the drivers should take centre stage. It was a big challenge to get the tyres up to the ideal temperature for a flying lap in qualifying, and then to manage it for a longer distance in the race. We managed this better and better over the course of the season. The fact that we ended the final weekend on a high, with two poles, a third and a first place, was obviously very pleasing. We are already looking forward to next year.”

**Ulrich Fritz, Mercedes AMG DTM team principal:** “We have witnessed great motor racing in this year’s DTM, and a lot of that is down to the new generation of Hankook tyre. The race tyre degraded far more dramatically and had a higher performance peak. That is what everyone wanted – drivers and the powers that be. In the end, the fans benefitted from this, as it produced exciting races with different strategies. There was no set pit stop window, and you could not predict how the race would pan out. Everything was very positive.”

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