**Alessandro Zanardi set for guest DTM appearance on Hankook tyres in Misano**

**Misano, Italy, hosts the first two night races in the history of the DTM this weekend. Arguably the most popular international touring car series, the DTM has invited former Formula 1 driver Alessandro Zanardi to this milestone event, where he made his race debut in a DTM car and on tyres supplied by premium tyre maker Hankook. The Italian is also competing without his prosthetic legs for the first time and drives a modified BMW using only his hands.**

***Misano/Italy, 26th August 2018*** – Alessandro Zanardi made 41 appearances in Formula 1 before suffering a huge crash in the Champ Car series at the Lausitzring, which resulted in the loss of both legs. Two years later, the Italian was back at the wheel of a racing car. Zanardi claimed his first victory since that crash in the World Touring Car Championship in 2005. Zanardi has also focussed on the sport of paracycling, winning three individual gold medals at the Paralympics in London and Rio de Janeiro. His BMW has been modified and equipped with a hand-operated brake system for his DTM debut. This allows the 51-year-old to both accelerate and brake with his hands.

“I have to assert up to 65 kilograms of pressure on the brake lever, but my arms are strong enough to cope with that. Riding my hand bike has kept me in good condition and I am fit and ready for the DTM races,” said Zanardi. He has successfully tested the new system in Vallelunga, Italy, and was impressed by the DTM car. “The car looks like a touring car but is a thoroughbred racing car. It is less like a Formula 1 car than an IndyCar with a lot of downforce. You need a lot of strength to drive this racing machine round the track. However, it is incredibly good fun, as the performance is incredible.”

The Italian is under no illusion about what he can expect from his DTM debut. The goal for the oldest driver in the field is to finish ahead of one or two drivers, if possible. Zanardi: “It is not enough to just be good in the DTM. You have to be excellent if you want to be up there in contention. The standard of driver is higher than in Formula 1, where the car is regularly the key to success. In the DTM, the cars have roughly the same performance and the field is always very evenly matched. As such, it comes down to small details. I will have fun and do my best. Let’s see what happens.”

The test in Vallelunga also gave Zanardi the opportunity to familiarise himself with the race tyre provided by premium tyre maker Hankook, which has been exclusive partner to the DTM since 2011. “I basically spent two days in a row in the car, testing,” said the Italian. “I was amazed at how consistent the Hankook race tyre is. The Hankook designers have done a great job.”

|  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- |
| **Contact:**  **Hankook Tire Europe GmbH |** Corporate Communications Europe/CIS **|** Siemensstr. 14, 63263 Neu-Isenburg **|** Germany | | | |
| **Anna Pasternak**  PR Manager  Tel.: +49 (0) 61 02 8149 – 173  a.pasternak@hankookreifen.de | **Yara Willems**  Public Relations  Tel.: +49 (0) 6102 8149 – 172  y.willems@hankookreifen.de |  |  |