**Premium tyre maker Hankook and the DTM line up together at season finale in Hockenheim for eighth time**

**Tension is building ahead of the DTM finale at the Hockenheimring. This weekend, the iconic circuit near Heidelberg hosts the final two races of the 2018 season, with three drivers still vying to be crowned champion. The advantage lies with Mercedes-Benz drivers Paul Di Resta and Gary Paffett in first and second place. However, lurking ominously behind them is the man of the hour: René Rast (Audi). The 31-year-old has won the last four races in a row to join the battle at the top of the overall standings. Rast showed he has nerves of steel at last year’s finale, when he caught championship leader Mattias Ekström in the final race to claim his maiden DTM title in his rookie season. Premium tyre maker Hankook has been exclusive partner of arguably the most popular international touring car series since 2011 and, with the quick and consistent Ventus Race tyre, has been instrumental in ensuring that motorsport fans have once again been treated to a feast of exciting and attractive motorsport this season.**

***Hockenheim/Germany, 9th October 2018*** – Paul Di Resta arrives in Hockenheim for the DTM finale as the championship leader. The Mercedes-Benz driver has been very consistent so far, with three wins and a total of six podium finishes to his name. However, his lead over fellow Mercedes-Benz man Gary Paffett, who won the opening race in Hockenheim back in May, stands at just four points. Reigning DTM champion René Rast is within striking distance of the leading duo, following his impressive winning run. However, the Audi driver needs a perfect weekend, in order to overcome the 30-point deficit and reel in Di Resta.

A varied layout awaits the drivers at the Hockenheimring, where fast straights and corners alternate with slower sections and hairpins. While the DTM cars reach speeds of over 260 km/h in the Parabolica, maximum grip is the key in the tight Motodrom section. “To be successful in Hockenheim, you have to get the right compromise when setting up the car. In order to reduce the large amount of strain on the tyre construction in the fast corners, the air pressures should be a little higher and the camber settings lower,” says Hankook DTM race engineer Thomas Baltes.

The rough asphalt, which is black in places, and high kerbs on the 4.574-kilometre track do pose a challenge for the Hankook Ventus Race. However, the premium tyre manufacturer’s race tyre has always mastered this challenge with great aplomb in recent years. By contrast, the DTM drivers must battle with the bumpy track surface, which causes the cars to ‘bounce’. This uncontrollable bouncing makes it difficult for the drivers to find the right braking point ahead of key spots like turn two and the hairpin. Thomas Baltes: “You cannot completely prevent bouncing at the Hockenheimring, but you can reduce the effect with specific chassis and spring settings.”

The drivers must be particularly careful in the cool temperatures expected at the iconic circuit in the Hardtwald forest. In these conditions it takes longer to get the fresh set of Hankook tyres, no longer pre-heated this season, up to the ideal working temperature of 90 to 110 degrees. “The drivers now have enough experience and no longer enter into any unnecessary manoeuvres or battles on the new, and thus cold, tyres. They know that it takes a while to get the tyres working. The quicker they manage that, the sooner they can take advantage of the high level of grip provided by the Ventus Race,” says the Hankook DTM race engineer.

As well as hosting the title showdown in the DTM, the new champion in the FIA Formula 3 European Championship will also be decided in Hockenheim. Since 2012, premium tyre maker Hankook has supplied the series, which is widely regarded as the strongest single-seater series for young drivers, with the Ventus Race. The tyre’s consistently high grip levels offer the young drivers optimal support. Favourite to take the title is Mick Schumacher who, like René Rast in the DTM, arrives in Hockenheim on the back of a remarkable run, having won five of the last six races. The 19-year-old arrives at the final round of the season with a lead of 49 points and could conceivably wrap up the title in the first of the weekend’s three races.

In contrast, the 2018 Hankook Best Pit Stop Award already has its winner. Audi Sport Team Phoenix holds an unassailable lead of 56 points ahead of the finale in Hockenheim. The crew, with Mike Rockenfeller at the wheel, successfully defended the title it won last year and, with three overall victories to its name, is the record winner of the Hankook Best Pit Stop Award. The premium tyre maker and exclusive DTM tyre partner has used this award since 2011 to acknowledge the important work carried out by the mechanics during a pit stop, which can make the difference between victory and defeat. As well as a crystal trophy, the fastest team is also rewarded with a team event.

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