**Marco Wittmann wins DTM debut in Assen, Netherlands – René Rast leads championship at halfway point**

**Marco Wittmann won Saturday’s DTM debut in Assen, Netherlands. The BMW driver held his nerve in the rain to cross the finish line with a 3.137-second lead after 31 laps of racing. René Rast (Audi) came home third to defend his lead in the overall standings, ensuring he tops the Drivers’ Championship at the halfway point of the season in what is arguably the most popular international touring car series. With rain falling in the early stages, the teams opted for the wet-weather tyre of premium tyre maker Hankook, which impressed with its usual high level of grip both on a very wet surface and as the track started to dry out towards the end of the race.**

***Assen/Netherlands, 20th July 2019*** – The weather initially took centre stage when the DTM made its debut in Assen. Heavy rain resulted in the race starting behind the safety car, which released the cars three laps into race number nine of the season. Pole-sitter Marco Wittmann held onto his position at the front of the field and, over the course of the race, successfully fended off the attacks of championship leader René Rast (Audi). Even after the two rivals had come in for a fresh set of Hankook wet tyres on laps 15 and 16, the positions remained the same.

At this point in the race, the fastest man in the field was Audi driver Nico Müller, who started the race from sixth place. After his mandatory pit stop on lap 25, the Swiss re-joined the 4.555-kilometre track in Assen in first place. However, Wittmann produced a skilful overtaking manoeuvre the following lap to move back into first place and defended his lead superbly through to the finish.

This was the BMW driver’s third win of the season and sees him climb to fourth place in the Drivers’ Championship. Runner-up Nico Müller remains second in the overall standings behind fellow Audi man Rast, who finished third at the first ever DTM race in Assen, Netherlands. Rast was followed over the finish line by BMW drivers Philipp Eng and Timo Glock in fourth and fifth place. The best of the Aston Martin drivers was Jake Dennis in twelfth.

Manfred Sandbichler, Hankook Motorsport Director Europe: “We have witnessed a successful DTM premiere in Assen. All the drivers did a top job in these difficult conditions. There were hardly any crashes on a very wet track at the start, and yet there were some remarkable battles and overtaking manoeuvres. Marco Wittmann drove a virtually flawless race, as did his rivals Müller and Rast. All the drivers put on a great show for the big crowds. While there was standing water in some areas of track in the heavy rain early on, the surface started to dry out towards the end of the race. The Hankook wet tyre produced a top-class performance from the first lap to the last.”

**Marco Wittmann (BMW):** “For me, that was a race in which everything came together superbly, including the Hankook tyre. Audi got the tyre working faster than we did at the start, but we were a little stronger in the long run. The question is always how high the optimal air pressure should be for a wet tyre at the start, and we simply had a better hand than our rivals in that regard. The pole in the dry and victory in the wet – that was an awesome day for me today.”

**Nico Müller (Audi):** “The Hankook wet tyre worked well all race. My first set was always in the ideal operating window, which allowed me to set fast lap times on it. After the pit stop, it took me a while to get the second set of tyres working. That allowed Marco to overtake me on his Hankook wet tyres, which were already at the ideal temperature. He deserved the win, as he drove flawlessly.”

**René Rast (Audi):** “The very first DTM race in Assen, and it had to be in the rain – that was very tricky today. The Hankook wet tyres held up well. It was a little difficult to get them working at the start, but we had no problem after that. We are happy with the race and the tyres.”

**Ferdinand von Habsburg (Aston Martin):** “Hankook’s wet-weather tyre worked well. However, it was extremely difficult in these conditions to work your way through the field in all the spray. Today, as a rookie, I contested the ninth race of this DTM season and the 125th DTM race on Hankook tyres. That is really impressive when you consider how many sets of tyres have been used so far, all of the same consistently high quality. I wish the Hankook DTM team and everyone in the DTM all the best and plenty more grip for the next 125 races.”

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