**Gary Paffett wins in Zandvoort**

**to extend his overall lead in the DTM**

**Gary Paffett emphatically won Saturday’s race at the fifth DTM race weekend of the year in Zandvoort. The Mercedes-Benz driver started from pole position and, with the exception of his mandatory pit stop, never surrendered the lead. His third win of the season in arguably the most popular international touring car series sees the British driver extend his overall lead to 21 points. With track temperatures soaring above 40 degrees, the race tyre supplied by premium tyre maker Hankook produced a strong overall performance at one of the most demanding circuits in the DTM. The high degree of consistency ensured the crowds at the circuit in the Dutch dunes were treated to exciting battles right down to the finish.**

***Zandvoort/Netherlands, 14th July 2018*** – Race nine of the 2018 DTM season began in glorious sunshine in Zandvoort on Saturday. Pole sitter Gary Paffett held onto the lead at the start, before coming into the pits for a fresh set of Hankook race tyres on lap nine. The 37-year-old was then able to control the race and, after 34 laps of racing, claim the 23rd win of his DTM career. He was followed over the line by fellow Mercedes-Benz drivers Paul Di Resta, Lucas Auer and Pascal Wehrlein in positions two to four, making it a top-four shut-out for Mercedes-Benz.

The best-placed Audi driver was Dutchman and local favourite Robin Frijns in fifth. Timo Glock in sixth place was the best of the BMW drivers. In the Drivers’ Championship, Paul Di Resta climbed to second place, with Glock third. René Rast endured a difficult Saturday. The Audi driver led the race by almost 24 seconds from lap 13, as he was the only driver not to have made his mandatory pit stop by that point. However, an excursion off the track by fellow Audi man Nico Müller, and the resulting appearance of the safety car, saw the reigning DTM champion’s lead disintegrate and he eventually rejoined the race down in 17th place after his tyre change on the penultimate lap.

Hankook Motorsport Director Manfred Sandbichler: “As expected, it was a demanding race – for the drivers, but also for the Hankook race tyres, which had to cope with the extreme loads they are subjected to in Zandvoort. Gary Paffett produced a flawless performance to claim his third win of the season and extend his lead in the overall standings. Congratulations to Robin Frijns too, who put in a fine display to finish fifth at his home event.”

**Gary Paffett (Mercedes-Benz):** “Zandvoort is a tough circuit for the tyres. The strain on the tyres is very high, due to the fast corners, the sharp-edged kerbs and the sand on the track. Despite this, the Hankook tyres worked very well and I am very happy to have claimed my third win of the season on them.”

**Paul Di Resta** **(Mercedes-Benz):** “Four Mercedes-Benz in the top four – that is a great result for us. The set-up of our cars was perfect and allowed us to get the maximum out of the Hankook slick. Compliments to the Hankook race tyres, with which we were able to produce such an outstanding performance.”

**Lucas Auer** **(Mercedes-Benz):** “I had a nice race on the Hankook tyres. Despite the high demands here in Zandvoort, I never had the feeling that they were deteriorating. They were consistently quick throughout the entire race.”

**Robin Frijns (Audi):** “I am very happy with the Hankook tyres. I was able to manage them well on this difficult track and am pleased with my fifth place here in Zandvoort, in front of my home crowd.”

**Timo Glock (BMW):** “The Hankook race tyres are put under a particularly large amount of strain here in Zandvoort. However, I had no issues with them. They were very consistent and worked very well in these tough conditions.”

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