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## **Mike Rockenfeller wins tire battle at Assen**

- **Tire thriller decides Sunday's race**
- **René Rast fifth after second pit stop and fightback**
- **Seven of the eight Audi RS 5 DTM in the top ten**

**Assen, July 21, 2019 – A spectacular DTM premiere at Assen in the Netherlands: Following the rain battle on Saturday, the spectators on Sunday got to watch a crazy tire thriller on a dry track of the famous TT Circuit that Mike Rockenfeller from Audi Sport Team Phoenix decided in his favor. With Nico Müller in third position, Audi, just like the day before, achieved a double podium. In spite of a second pit stop, leader of the standings René Rast still finished his 50th DTM race in fifth place.**

With five Audi RS 5 DTM cars in the top five spots of the grid, Audi had a perfect starting base for the first race of the second half of the season. However, even in Friday's free practice, it was apparent that the tires are exposed to extreme stress on a dry track at Assen. "Today was about driving fast and taking it easy on the tires at the same time," said Mike Rockenfeller after his first DTM victory since 2017 at Zandvoort. "It was difficult to sense what the tires were doing. In my second stint, I was able to manage them well and to attack, but it was anything but easy. Thank you to my team! Today was a perfect day: in qualifying and in the race, everything went superbly. That's how you can win in the DTM."

Having entered the race from third position on the grid, Rockenfeller, after the start, was initially in second behind pole sitter René Rast from Audi Sport Team Rosberg. The DTM leader had a comfortable advantage some of the time but then, while leading the race, had to pit for a second tire change. "I thought I had everything under control but suddenly the tires hit rock bottom," said Rast, who dropped to 13th position due to his second stop. With a spectacular fightback and lap times that occasionally were up to five seconds faster than those of his rivals, he fought back to fifth position on the last nine laps.

Nico Müller from Audi Sport Team Abt Sportsline secured third position. During his pit stop, the Swiss lost a lot of time due to a problem on the impact wrench and in the end had to reduce pace because of an impending puncture. "A rear tire was already losing air, otherwise I could have still attacked Marco (Wittmann)," said Müller. "At the beginning, behind the other cars, I stressed my tires a little too much. That's why I pitted earlier and was facing a long second stint. It was extremely difficult to keep the tires alive. In the end, it was a really close call. I'm very happy with two podiums this weekend."



Jonathan Aberdein in fourth position clinched the so far best DTM result of the customer team WRT Team Audi Sport. With Robin Frijns, Jamie Green and Pietro Fittipaldi in positions six, nine and ten, seven of the eight Audi RS 5 DTM cars finished in the points. Only Loïc Duval, in eleventh, just barely missed scoring a point. Like Rast, the Frenchman changed tires twice.

“This was an incredibly action-packed race,” said Head of Audi Motorsport Dieter Gass. “René was very fast but then somehow stressed his tires too much. Even so, a fifth place in spite of two pit stops is a very good result. I’m very happy for Mike and Nico, who in the end still had a puncture too. It was a fantastic race in front of a great crowd. I think the fans got to see a real spectacle today. We’ll definitely be delighted to return to Assen – not only because of our strong results today.”

Audi scored 68 out of 88 possible points on Sunday and extended its advantage in the manufacturers’ classification over BMW to 170 points. In the drivers’ classification, René Rast leads with 158 points ahead of Nico Müller (136) and Marco Wittmann (118), who was the only BMW driver to score points on Sunday. In the teams’ classification, Audi Sport Team Rosberg continues to sit in the top spot of the standings, ahead of Audi Sport Team Abt Sportsline.

Next up in the DTM is Brands Hatch on August 10 and 11. The tradition-steeped circuit on the outskirts of London is regarded as the most challenging race track of the year that all Audi drivers are already looking forward to.

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