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24h Nürburgring winner Engel on door-to-door battles in the DTM and the "mini Nordschleife" in Zandvoort

- **Winner of the ADAC Ravenol 24h Nürburgring reveals what he loves about Zandvoort**
- **"The DTM is an unbelievably tough series. I've been a fan since I was a child"**

Munich. Maro Engel (Monaco) has enjoyed a dream start to the 2026 motorsport season. The Mercedes-AMG driver backed up a win and a third place at the DTM opener at the Red Bull Ring with overall victory at last weekend's ADAC Ravenol 24h Nürburgring. Engel is now hoping to extend his successful run at the coming DTM round in Zandvoort (22nd to 24th May). Ahead of the race weekend on the North Sea coast of the Netherlands, the DTM championship leader discusses his special relationship with the DTM, the cheetahs on his Mercedes-AMG GT3, and the excitement about racing at the circuit in the dunes.

Maro, you have reached a milestone this year, as you contest your tenth season in the DTM. What does the DTM mean to you?

For me, the DTM is absolutely high-performance sport. It is hard-fought, door to door, wheel to wheel, with the cars swapping pain now and again - and that is precisely what makes it so exciting. The DTM is an unbelievably tough series. I have been a fan since I was a child. Events like the Norisring are attended by over 100,000 spectators, who want to see exactly this kind of motorsport. I don't see the DTM as a springboard, but as a series, in which you get to test yourself against the best professional GT racers in the world. That is what makes it so appealing. I am proud to be in my tenth season, and still look forward to every race.

Now that a few days have passed, how do you, the championship leader, reflect on the opening DTM weekend?

Winning at the Red Bull Ring was a successful start to the season and confirmation of all the hard work we put in over the winter. The tests were primarily about understanding the new tyres quickly. It feels very good to know that we were able to convert that knowledge into such a strong weekend at the Red Bull Ring. It has been a while since my last victory - that made the moment all the sweeter, and I just enjoyed it. I spent the evening with my wife at an Umberto Tozzi concert, which was the perfect end to a very nice day.

The next round of the DTM is in Zandvoort - what connection do you have with the circuit in the Dutch dunes?

First and foremost, I have very special memories of my victory there in 2023. That was a fantastic weekend - great weather, a good qualifying, and a very good race. That was my first win in the GT3 era of the DTM. If you make it onto the podium in the DTM, you have done a very good job. If you make it onto the very top step, those are very special moments, which you can look back on with a lot of pride.



What makes Circuit Zandvoort so special?

I believe that Zandvoort is one of the best tracks on the calendar. It is no coincidence that it is often referred to as a "mini Nordschleife": it is undulating, with a mixture of fast and slow corners. The circuit is nestled in the countryside, and every lap is fun. The two banked corners have made the track even more spectacular. Plus, the atmosphere there is always special.

Your DTM record reads 13 podiums since 2024. Where does that level of consistency come from, and how important is it in the race for the title?

Consistency is extremely important in the DTM, and vital if you want to win the title. At Mercedes-AMG Team Ravenol, we place great emphasis on that. We scrutinize ourselves after every session, after every outing, and are constantly trying to find ways to improve. If you consistently achieve the maximum, then the results will follow.

Your Mercedes-AMG GT3 has an eye-catching design. How did the idea come about?

I think the design is really cool. The cheetah is the fastest land animal in the world, which makes it perfectly suited to motor racing and gives the car a particularly striking look. The idea actually came from my father, who used to work as a designer, when he came to watch me at the Norisring. The idea then took shape in discussion with the two people responsible at Ravenol. I really like it, and am looking forward to hunting down more victories with the cheetah at the coming DTM races.

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