

01/06/2026

Ottaviani wins season-opener in the DTM eSports Championship

- **Qualifying lays the foundation for victory**
- **Thrilling strategic battle all the way to the finish**
- **Successful debut for new championship format**

Munich. Last Saturday marked the official start of the 2026 season in the DTM eSports Championship. An exciting race at the historic circuit amongst the dunes of Zandvoort saw Italian racer Alessandro Ottaviani (Team Vitality) prevail over Manuel Vera (HGE Racing Esports) and Maximilian Benecke (MOUZ).

It was also a successful debut for the new championship format. Around 600 drivers competed in a total of 19 splits. The top split was streamed live on the [DTM YouTube channel](#) and featured numerous new faces mixing it with the established elite drivers. This reveals just how much talent is waiting to be discovered in the sim racing scene, and shows what opportunities the new format provides.

Ottaviani secures pole position

Overtaking manoeuvres are traditionally difficult at Zandvoort, which is regarded as one of the most challenging circuits on the calendar. Consequently, qualifying assumes massive importance and Ottaviani laid the foundations for his success by securing pole position ahead of Manuel Vera, Tomás Ribeiro (Xero Point Racing) and Maximilian Benecke.

Strategic duel decides the race outcome

Ottaviani then made a scorching start to hold onto his lead against Vera and Ribeiro. When the pit-stop window opened, Vera and Caique Oliveira (BS+Competition) decided to come in early for their first mandatory stops. Ottaviani reacted one lap later to defend his lead as a fierce duel developed between the Italian driver and Vera. The Spaniard continually pressured Ottaviani but was unable to find a way past on the tight circuit. Around the halfway point of the race, Vera applied another tactical trick to try and take the lead, making his second mandatory pit stop on lap 20. Ottaviani again pitted one lap later, returning to the track with a razor-thin lead over his rival.

Racing on a significantly older set of tyres, Ottaviani then had to fend off the attacks of his pursuer for more than 25 minutes. However, the Team Vitality driver produced a commanding performance to defend his lead, crossing the finishing line just 0.323 seconds ahead of Vera after 60 minutes of racing. The podium was completed by Maximilian Benecke. Tomás Ribeiro

secured fourth place. An alternative strategic approach from Turcka Häkkinen (Needracing.com) and Nikodem Wisniewski (Drivelab Coaching) provided more excitement. Both drivers delayed their second mandatory pit stop until around ten minutes before the end of the race before battling their way up into the points. Having dropped back briefly to tenth and 13th positions just before the second pit-stop window, they were eventually rewarded by finishing in fifth and sixth spots.

Alessandro Ottaviani: "This was a completely unexpected win and I am unbelievably happy. Manuel was probably the fastest driver in the field today and I tried everything to keep him behind me. Maximilian's pace was really good too. Overtaking In Zandvoort is extremely difficult – which is why qualifying was the key to success today."

Manuel Vera: "I did not expect to be able to fight for the win today. I knew our pace is good, but didn't know it would be that good. The field is just unbelievably strong. Ottaviani did a fantastic job. I might have been a bit faster, but at the same time I had to keep an eye on Maximilian in the rear-view mirror."

Next stop: Nürburgring

The drivers do not have much time to catch their breath. The second race in the DTM eSports Championship takes place this Saturday, 16th June 2026. Once again, the top split will be streamed live on the [DTM YouTube channel](#) from 19:00.

Race calendar 2026

02.05. – Red Bull Ring (Pre-Season Show Race – no points)

30.05. – Zandvoort

06.06. – Lausitzring

11.07. – Norisring

18.07. – Oschersleben

01.08. – Sachsenring

15.08. – Finale at the DTM event at the Nürburgring (Nürburgring & Hockenheimring)

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