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## Championship leader Lirim Zendeli intent on joining Formula 1: “That’s the dream”

- ADAC Formula 4 title win can open doors
- “My love of cars comes from my dad”
- “I want to make my life in motor racing, and that’s important to me”

Munich: With six wins from twelve races and a 24-point lead on his main rival while racing for Kerpen-based outfit US Racing CHR5, Lirim Zendeli, has dominated the first half of the ADAC Formula 4 season and is in title contention in his third year at the ADAC High-Speed Academy. 18-year-old Zendeli’s family are originally from Macedonia but now live in Bochum, and he gets his ‘love of cars’ from his father – but Zendeli junior dreams of doing great things. He wants to make his life and career in motorsport. In this interview, in the run-up to one of the season’s highlights when the ADAC Formula 4 will stage its races at the Hockenheimring under the banner of the Emirates Formula 1 German Grand Prix, he talks about how he got started, his goals and role models.

### When did you first get interested in motor sport?

Lirim Zendeli: “My dad always used to watch Formula 1, and I would watch with him, even though I didn’t understand very much. I get my love of cars from my dad. Whenever I used to see nice, loud cars, I would break out in smiles. I’ve always enjoyed driving. When I was ten, I would sit on my dad’s lap at the wheel of his car in our small village and steer. That used to be a real treat for me.”

### How did you get into motor racing?

Zendeli: “I began karting as a hobby at indoor tracks in 2010 and contested some very minor championships. I first began to race in a more professional manner with goals and everything in 2012 when I competed in the ADAC Kart Masters and the German Kart Championship. I won the 2014 ADAC Kart Masters, spent a couple of days testing in the ADAC Formula 4 after that and finally turned professional in 2016.”

### What’s your big dream?

Zendeli: “The dream is Formula 1, really. My goal is to become a professional racing driver, but I won’t give up even if it doesn’t work out with Formula 1. I want to earn my living through motor sport. As far as I’m concerned, it’s important that I spend my life in motor racing.”

### What are your plans in the medium-term? Where do you hope to be next year and in the years to come?

Zendeli: “I will definitely be in Formula 3 next year, but first, I want to become champion in the ADAC Formula 4, which should open a few doors, hopefully. And maybe then, I’ll be able to follow the normal route into Formula 1 via Formula 3 and Formula 2.”



**What hobbies do you have apart from motor racing?**

Zendeli: "There's not a deal of free time left after racing, but I have to keep fit, so I like to play football and I'm in a club. I also practise Taekwondo and go jogging and swimming."

**Do your team-mates ever ask you for tips, like rookie David Schumacher, for example?**

Zendeli: "The whole team compares data, and then of course, you can take a look at how the other guys have done. You can learn a lot as a rookie by doing that. Of course, I would never try to compromise a team-mate during the races and make sure that I don't make life unnecessarily difficult for him when we're racing together and having to push."

**You'll be racing at Hockenheim under the Formula 1 banner next weekend. How important is that to you?**

Zendeli: "It will feel like we're competing with the big boys in motorsport. We'll be rubbing shoulders with the greats, which for me as a junior motor racing driver will be absolutely fabulous. I'm also looking forward to the large audience that F1 attracts."

**What do you hope to achieve at Hockenheim from a sporting perspective?**

Zendeli: "Hockenheim is a great race track and really suits me, actually. I'll have to give it 100 percent again in order to be as successful as I was at the first Hockenheim race weekend when I took two wins and a third place. I can't wrap things up in the championship just yet. It's too early to call, but I'll try to extend my lead and then get the job done at the Nürburgring in early August on my home track."

**Who are your role models?**

Zendeli: "Michael Schumacher has been one of my role models all through my career, but there's someone else that I also look up to, who is still in Formula 1, and that's Lewis Hamilton. They both inspire me."

**ADAC Formula 4: 2018 calendar**

13/04/18 - 15/04/18	Motorsport Arena Oschersleben
04/05/18 - 06/05/18	Hockenheimring (with DTM)
18/05/18 - 20/05/18	Lausitzring (with DTM)
08/06/18 - 10/06/18	Red Bull Ring Spielberg/AUT
20/07/18 - 22/07/18	Hockenheimring (with Formula 1)
03/08/18 - 05/08/18	Nürburgring
21/09/18 - 23/09/18	Hockenheimring

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