

2018 ADAC GT Masters Round 3 Report

After a month hiatus, the German ADAC GT Masters returned once again for its third Round of the 2018 season. Venturing outside of Germany for the 2nd time on the calendar, The Red Bull Ring in Austria set the stage for another thrilling weekend.

After a conservative string of top points finishes, the Leingarten based Callaway Competition team entered the weekend third, 16 points adrift in the Drivers' standings. The Red Bull Ring Circuit has a rich history with the Corvette squad, which has seen the team capture no less than 6th overall race wins. Heading in to the weekend, the team was anxious to add to their growing tally.

Leading the charge was once again the German Duo of Keilwitz & Kirchhöfer. The race week started out strongly with the Nr1 Corvette placing in the top 1 or 2 positions during both Thursdays 4 sessions and Top 2 & 10 during Fridays Free Practises. "Things have been going well for us here," explained Marvin. "Even though the weather with intermittent rain showers made it a bit more difficult at times, we have set our sights high for this track. Everyone knows that it suits the Corvette. Consequently, we need to make sure that we perform well this weekend."



Both Qualifying 1 and Race 1 saw optimal conditions, with gorgeous sunny skies and warm temperatures greeting the teams. The result of these conditions provided the perfect track scenario for the C7 GT3-R to take advantage of. After claiming pole position, a trouble-free run on Saturday resulted in the first victory of the season for the Callaway team. "It could not have gone any better," explains Keilwitz. "The Corvette is a perfect fit for the Red Bull Ring. We know we have to win here if we want to be in contention for the title, because there are other tracks such as the Sachsenring that aren't so good for us. During the two safety car deployments towards the end, I was picking up graining, but I still had two good restarts. That was a solid basis for retaining the lead."

Sunday proved to be a greater challenge for the competitors, which saw both sunny and wet conditions. Fortunately, Qualifying saw perfect weather and another perfect pole position. This time captured by Daniel Keilwitz by a razor thin 0.090 seconds! "I could have found another tenth maybe, but otherwise it was a great lap, giving us a fantastic grid position for the second race."

Moving to the 2nd race on Sunday, the start saw an officially declared wet race (with dark clouds looming nearby). This provided the teams the freedom of tyre choice, should a need for wet compounds be needed. After a clean opening few laps, moderate rain began to cover the rear part of the Red Bull Ring circuit. This allowed certain teams to gamble with an extra pit stop to allow wet tyres. Opting to defy the others (thus only requiring 1 stop), the Nr1 brilliantly soldiered on with their slick tyres to pit & hand over to Kirchhöfer.

"I saw the clouds coming over before the start, and I thought it might begin to rain." explains Keilwitz. "Then, after two or three laps, it started to come down. At that point, you must decide if you're going to stay out. I got the impression that the slicks were still working OK. The cars that changed to rain tyres were no faster than us. That's why we waited until the mandatory pit stop before switching to wets."

In the end, the Nr1 C7 GT3-R brought home yet another hard-fought win. This also marked the 29th victory for the team as well as the 20th for Keilwitz!



The Third Round was a mixed weekend overall for the sister Callaway Corvette team of RWT Racing. Because of the strong nature of the Corvette in Austria (and a podium last season), the team was aiming high. Unfortunately, various issues plagued the Nr13 overall. Despite this, the team captured 19th overall in Race 2 and with it, the victory in their Pirelli Trophy classification. "We are disappointed with the whole weekend, we had hoped for more, we had one, two problems and made small mistakes and then you are fast behind in the field on the grid. It's hard to get ahead but winning the Pirelli Trophy is a good finish."

Now it’s the long Summer break for Callaway Competition and RWT racing, which sees a return on the 3rd of August at the Nurburgring.



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Team Quotes:

Daniel Keilwitz (Nr1 Valvoline/Roller C7 GT3): “Two pole positions, two wins, and we’ve also taken over at the top of the championship. Things could not have gone better for us this weekend. It has been a major step forward in our title challenge. I saw the clouds coming over before the start, and I thought it might begin to rain. Then, after two or three laps, it started to come down. At that point, you must decide if you’re going to stay out. I got the impression that the slicks were still working OK. The cars that changed to rain tyres were no faster than us. That’s why we waited until the mandatory pit stop before switching to wets. The Corvette is a perfect fit for the Red Bull Ring. We knew we must win here if we want to be in contention for the title, because there are other tracks such as the Sachsenring that aren't so good for us."

Marvin Kirchhöfer (Nr1 Valvoline/Roller C7 GT3): "It's been a perfect weekend for us. It started well, starting with the tests on Thursday, even though the weather with intermittent rain showers made it a bit more difficult at times. We had set our sights high for this track. We needed to make sure that we performed well this weekend. The team did a great job to help grab my first pole in ADAC GT. Our timing was perfect. My lap came just at the right time. There wasn’t much left in the way of potential. I was on the limit throughout, but it paid off. In terms of Race 1, I would say that the key to our victory was getting pole position. We had a great race with a perfect strategy. It was not quite as easy as it looked, because we were struggling a bit with tyre degradation.

Race 2, We weren’t expecting to win twice. I’m more delighted now we’ve achieved that. It was a perfect weekend for us, with maximum points yield. Next on the itinerary are some tracks where it’s going to be harder for us to compete at the front. At the beginning of my stint, I had everything under control, but as the track dried, it was extremely difficult to keep the tyres alive.”