

2016 ADAC GT Masters Preview

The 2016 GT3 season officially kicks off this weekend for Corvette Motorsport at the 10th annual German ADAC GT Masters Championship. Held at the twisty Oschersleben circuit, the German series showcases 33 competitors through a vast variety of cars and drivers from all over the globe.

After a long winter of testing and preparation, Callaway Competition will debut a trio of their newly constructed C7 GT3R "Beasts" to take on the newest GT3 machinery from Audi, BMW, Mercedes, Porsche, and Lamborghini. Spearheading the squad, will be the Nr 77 Valvoline entry piloted by two-time GT3 champion, Daniel Keilwitz. Joining him will be former Porsche Supercup driver Jules Gounon. The Nr 69 Entry returns once again this year with German driver Patrick Assenheimer and GT3 stalwart Dominik Schwager.



The third entry is the Nr 31 Whelen Engineering backed machine of Boris Said and Loris Hezemans (son of Toine and brother Mike) who makes his GT3 debut this year. The young Dutchman fills in (the first of 3 races) for the USA bound Eric Curran, who has prior commitments to the IMSA series in a Daytona Prototype. "I think it's an amazing car to drive," explains Hezemans. "The car has a lot of downforce, and an engine which comes from the previous gen Z06.R (reliable and powerful). The car simply looks amazing. My first priority is to finish both races during the weekend and learn as much as possible from this experience."



The C7 GT3R comes from a great heritage. The previous C6 based Z06.R GT3 has clinched several GT3 titles, including the FIA GT3 (Team title in 2007, Drivers in 2008/2010), The ADAC GT Masters (Team title in 2009 and Drivers in 2013), as well as back-to-back Team & Driver's titles in the UAE GT Series. "The new Corvette is not only a good race car, but a very good street car," explains Team Principal Giovanni Ciccone. "With so many new GT3 cars appearing, a good car will not be sufficient. You will need to have a very good car, to be successful."

The recent pre-season test proved very valuable for the Leingarten based team, which saw consistent top-5 lap times (and as high as 2nd for car 77) against the "fleet" of ultra-competitive 2016 Audi R8 LMS machines. "The base is good, and the potential is definitely there for the season," explains Daniel Keilwitz. "However, we need to see how we do at the season opener. We've had a strong winter testing season with great reliability, so we will be aiming for a strong debut this weekend."



In the Gentleman's category, RWT return with their Callaway C6 Z06.R machine with drivers Sven Barth and Remo Lips. Consistency will be the main focus, as the pair tackle the German based series together for the second year running. "We're pleased with this driver pairing and think that it was the right decision to focus on the same drivers in 2016," said team boss Gerd Beisel. "We hope that we can improve further with Sven and Remo and move the team forwards."

The team have been regularly involved since 2014, achieving one overall win so far. "Our team has evolved into a proper unit in recent years," said Beisel. "We can tackle the tasks ahead on the basis of this level of trust. We hope to really do our bit in 2016. We're aiming for top-ten finishes in the races, in addition to winning the title in the Gentlemen category."

Additional Quotes:

Giovanni Ciccone (Team Principal Callaway Competition): "In general, I am pleased with the preparations for this season. The first milestone will be the first qualifying, then we will have a better idea where we stand. Some team's haven´t shown their full potential just yet."

"But one thing is for sure, this season will not be an easy task. The starting grid is terrific, all great manufacturers are represented with their new racing cars. There are more than 30 entries and 8 brands at the start, the competition will be extremely close and there is no room for mistakes. But I am positive and confident, that we will grab our chances this year."

Patrick Assenheimer (Nr 69 AutoArenA.de C7 GT3): "I am looking forward to the coming season with Dominik! I hope I can benefit from his years of experience in motorsport. In any case we will give everything together in the new car!"

Dominik Schwager (Nr 69 AutoArenA.de C7 GT3): "I am delighted to be racing with the new C7 Callaway and to have Patrick as my teammate in the ADAC GT Masters. Callaway is a small and very committed team that has put together an amazing car that I feel we can challenge for race wins. Although I haven't known Patrick for that long, I think we will make a good team. He is also very motivated and now has some experience in the ADAC GT Masters. It's certainly an exciting season ahead for us."

Loris Hezemans (Nr 31 Whelen Engineering C7 GT3): "My first priority for this weekend will be to finish both races during the weekend and learn as much as possible from this experience. Given that I will only be driving in 3 race weekends I need to ensure that I get as much track time as possible in order to learn for the next rounds, as well as next year. Given the high competition I would be happy if we can run in the top-10, but I know with the high levels of competition, and still my low experience as well as limited testing with the car, that this will not come easy, but I always ensure to set a challenge."

The first race kicks off at 13:15 local time (07:15 Eastern in the USA), with streaming coverage at: www.adac-gt-masters.de

CORVETTE MOTORSPORT

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