



ABT Sportsline 2021 – Press Release – Week 31

DTM at Zolder: “Mixed Emotions” for Team ABT Sportsline

Team ABT Sportsline travels to Zolder with mixed emotions this week for the **third race weekend of the 2021 DTM season** (both races start at 1 PM CEST on Saturday and Sunday, live on SAT.1 and ran.de).

The team led by **Hans-Jürgen Abt** and **Thomas Biermaier** has good, but also not so nice memories of the Belgian circuit. In 2002, **Laurent Aiello** and **Christian Abt** in the compact **Abt-Audi TT-R** ensured a superior 1-2 victory in the pouring rain. At that time, Zolder was the second race on the calendar and Aiello’s victory was an important step on the way to his sensational drivers’ **title** of the private Team ABT Sportsline against the factory teams from Mercedes-Benz and Opel.

By contrast, the **wounds** that Zolder left on the team from Kempten last year have not yet completely healed. Due to COVID-19, four DTM races were held at the Belgian circuit within one week. In these four races, **Nico Müller** lost his commanding championship lead to **René Rast**.

Robin Frijns also experienced two difficult weekends in 2020. After an **accident with a fire**, the ABT crew even had to **completely rebuild** his Audi RS 5 DTM on site in the Zolder paddock.

Nevertheless, Team ABT Sportsline’s **Zolder record** in seven DTM races so far is quite impressive: In addition to Laurent Aiello’s winner’s trophy from the 2002 season, there are six more Zolder trophies at ABT Sportsline in Kempten. In addition, today’s SAT.1 expert **Martin Tomczyk** secured his first DTM pole position with the Abt-Audi TT-R at Zolder in 2002.

By the way, the starting grid at Zolder in 2002 was very special: At that time, the ABT mechanics mounted **Red Bull and Hasseröder cans** on the endplates of the rear wings of the Abt-Audi TT-R cars for fun. Competitor Opel had found a loophole in the regulations at the time and declared a controversial widening of the rear wings as a **“rear wing holder”**.

Safety car deployments are not uncommon in the DTM at Zolder. Last year, Mike Rockenfeller benefited from this: Thanks to a good strategy, “Rocky” clinched second place and thus his best result of the 2020 season.

The 2013 DTM champion wants to build on this next weekend, as does championship leader Kelvin van der Linde, who describes Zolder as his favorite track on the DTM calendar. For Sophia Flörsch, Zolder is new territory. She has been preparing in the simulator.

Quotes before the DTM races at Zolder

Thomas Biermaier (Team Principal Team ABT Sportsline): “After the first two weekends in Monza and at the Lausitzring, I can say: The DTM is also a lot of fun for us in its new form. We have a strong grid, we see exciting races and the cars are closely matched, even though they are so different. With Zolder, we now have a track that is completely different from Monza and the Lausitzring. The cards will be reshuffled and we still have unfinished business from last year at Zolder.”

Kelvin van der Linde (ABT Audi R8 LMS #3): “Zolder is my favorite track on the DTM calendar, which is why I’m very much looking forward to the weekend. The track also suits our ABT Audi R8 LMS well. We also tested there a few weeks ago. Actually, everything fits together well for Zolder. After two strong weekends at Monza and at the Lausitzring, we have a lot of motivation. We are looking forward to more points for the championship and lots of cool battles.”

Mike Rockenfeller (ABT Audi R8 LMS #9): “Zolder is a track that I know well from the DTM. It’s very technical. Overtaking is extremely difficult. That’s why qualifying performance also has to be right there. The weather can also go crazy in Belgium. I think that the track suits our ABT Audi R8 LMS better than the Lausitzring last time. I’m really looking forward to Zolder.”

Sophia Flörsch (ABT Audi R8 LMS #99): “I’ve never been to Zolder before. That’s why it’s going to be exciting. I have been driving in the simulator to prepare as well as possible. In the DTM, we’re pretty limited in terms of tyres during the free practice sessions. We’ll try to find the best strategy and to complete as many kilometres as possible.”

Did you know that ...

... ABT Sportsline is auctioning off a spot at the ABT pit stand at the DTM event in aid of the **#wirfuertdieeifel** flood relief campaign? Bids can be placed at <https://www.abt-sportsline.de/spenden-auktion/> until 6 August.

... Team Principal **Thomas Biermaier** will be a guest at the virtual DTM press conference at 10 AM CEST on Wednesday?

... Technical Director **Florian Modlinger** will be on site at the DTM for the first time this season? The first two DTM weekends each clashed with Formula E.

... the weekend after Zolder, ABT Sportsline has the **season finale** of the Formula E World Championship at the **Tempelhof** Airport in Berlin on its schedule?

... DTM leader **Kelvin van der Linde** contested the Spa 24 Hours for Audi last weekend and finished second?

... **Mike Rockenfeller** used the short break between the Lausitzring and Zolder for a vacation with his family in **Italy**?



... **Robin Frijns**, driver for ABT Sportsline in the DTM from 2017 to 2020, calls the Zolder circuit a 'mini-Nordschleife'?

... **Sophia Flörsch** will be absent from the DTM at the Nürburgring due to the overlap with the Le Mans 24 Hours? ABT Sportsline will be announcing who will be standing in for Flörsch in the Eifel at the end of this week.

ABT dates for the media

Virtual Meet & Greet with Sophia, Mike and Kelvin via Zoom

Sunday, August 8, 08:30 CEST

Zoom link: <https://bit.ly/ABTDTMZolder2021>

Text/photos at: www.abt-sportsline.com/company/media/press-releases

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