



AMG
MOTORSPORT

[Finishing Positions Two, Six and 10 for Mercedes-AMG GT3s in the California 8 Hours; Buhk, Goetz and Marciello new Leaders in Intercontinental GT Challenge Driver Standings; Mercedes-AMG extends lead in Manufacturer Standings](#)

Press Information

Podium Success at the California 8 Hours Gives Mercedes-AMG a Double Lead in the IGTC

April 1, 2019

MONTEREY, California. After third place in the season-opening race in Bathurst, Mercedes-AMG also scored a podium finish at WeatherTech Raceway Laguna Seca in the second round of the Intercontinental GT Challenge (IGTC) last weekend in the California 8 Hours. The No. 999 Mercedes-AMG Team GruppeM Racing entry of Maximilian Buhk, Maximilian Goetz and Raffaele Marciello finished second in the California 8 Hours. As a result, the trio also moves up into the lead of the driver standings. In total, three Mercedes-AMG GT3s finished in the top-10 of the endurance race. With the good result, the performance and sports car brand from Affalterbach also extends its lead in the IGTC manufacturer standings.

In excellent weather and track conditions, spectators at the legendary WeatherTech Raceway Laguna Seca Raceway witnessed a thrilling second round of the IGTC, in which the Mercedes-AMG GT3 teams secured strong results.

The No. 999 entry of Mercedes-AMG Team GruppeM Racing had an exceptional start at the 8-hour race. From 10th place on the grid, Buhk gained five positions right away. After the first driver change, Goetz completed a faultless double stint, followed by Marciello, who drove the Mercedes-AMG GT3 up into the podium positions for the first time. As the race went on, the trio established itself among the frontrunners in the field. In the final third of the race, Goetz, Buhk and Marciello increased the pressure on the leaders more and more.

In his final double stint, finishing driver Marciello cemented second place, which he brought home after 327 laps. With this podium finish, the three Mercedes-AMG drivers now have a total of 36 points each and jointly move up into the lead of the Intercontinental GT Challenge driver standings.

With Mercedes-AMG Team GruppeM Racing's No. 888 sister car, Maro Engel, Yelmer Buurman and Luca Stolz started from 11th place on the grid. Having gained positions in the opening stages, the trio incurred a time penalty for overtaking under yellow and lost places again. In the remainder of the race, the team worked its way back up into the top-10 but was unable to make it all the way up to the front of the 20-car field. Final driver Maro Engel eventually crossed the finish line in sixth place.

The No. 43 Strakka Racing Mercedes-AMG GT3 rounds out the triple top-10 result for Mercedes-AMG. Christina Nielsen, Dominik Baumann and Adam Christodoulou started the race from 15th place on the grid. With consistently good laps and trouble-free changes, the trio continuously moved up throughout the eight hours of the race and saw final driver Baumann completing the good result of the Mercedes-AMG GT3s in the California 8 Hours by finishing in 10th place.

Having started 12th, the No. 44 car of the Mercedes-AMG Team Strakka Racing with Gary Paffett, Tristan Vautier and Lewis Williamson had bad luck. After a good start by Paffett, defending IGTC champion Vautier moved the car up into a temporary podium position. Halfway through the race, however, a steering issue forced the team to retire.

As the best-placed Mercedes-AMG cars, the No. 999 and the No. 888 scored valuable points for the IGTC manufacturer standings. The performance and sports car brand from Affalterbach extends its lead and already has a margin of 19 points after two of five rounds.

Maximilian Buhk, Driver – No. 999 Mercedes-AMG Team GruppeM Racing

Mercedes-AMG GT3: "The race was top. I made a super start, although it was a bit tight in the first two corners, but I made it through quite well. All in all, it was a very hard race without a safety car, without a single neutralization. As a result, we had to drive in a strategically clever way, which we managed. We also handled the increasing temperatures well and had the right tire management. Second place is great, but of course, we are looking at the overall situation in the championship. Therefore, the points we scored today were very important."

Maximilian Goetz, Driver – No. 999 Mercedes-AMG Team GruppeM Racing

Mercedes-AMG GT3: "We are super happy with second place. It was a really close race with a very good field of drivers. Max had a mega start that was the basis for our result. We didn't make any mistakes and made it through very well. Raffaele, Max and

the entire team have all done a great job. This is a huge step ahead for us in the championship.”

Raffaele Marciello, Driver – No. 999 Mercedes-AMG Team GruppeM Racing

Mercedes-AMG GT3: “After P3 at Bathurst, Saturday’s second place is super for the championship, of course. Consistency is the key to success. We can’t win every race, but when we keep going on like this, we are in a good position. In any case, today, we did everything right.”

Maro Engel, Driver – No. 888 Mercedes-AMG Team GruppeM Racing

Mercedes-AMG GT3: “First of all, congratulations to the number 999 sister car, they drove a great race, made it through very well and have scored valuable points. For us, things didn’t run entirely flawless, the first stint already was a bit difficult. Nevertheless, we are still quite happy with P6 in the end. We have also scored some good points, both for the manufacturer standings and for ourselves as the drivers. Thanks to everyone who has contributed to this.”

Luca Stolz, Driver – No. 888 Mercedes-AMG Team GruppeM Racing

Mercedes-AMG GT3: “In the opening stages, we had some issues and a penalty that cost us a better position. We certainly could have finished in the top five, a podium would have been within reach as well. We will learn from this and come back stronger. But all in all, it was a good weekend for Mercedes-AMG.”

Christina Nielsen, Driver – No. 43 Strakka Racing Mercedes-AMG GT3: “This was my first race weekend for Strakka Racing together with Adam Christodoulou and Dominik Baumann. Of course, there was a lot for me to learn, but all in all, we have made good progress. We discovered where we are strong already and what we still have to work on. We can certainly build on this top-10 result. Many thanks to Mercedes-AMG for the great support.”

Adam Christodoulou, Driver – No. 43 Strakka Racing Mercedes-AMG GT3:

“That was a very tough weekend for us and particularly for Christina as the only silver-rated driver in a field almost entirely made up of manufacturer-supported Pro cars. Nevertheless, we have shown our competitive spirit. We came from P15, but we were in the top-10 at the end, leaving some big names behind us. From that perspective, we are very happy.”

Stefan Wendl, Head of Mercedes-AMG Customer Racing: “We are celebrating second place like a victory with both teams. That was yet another unbelievably hard

race, something we know from the IGTC events meanwhile. A battle until the very last minute and at the end, we are overjoyed with being in the lead of the driver standings and having extended our lead in the manufacturer standings. That allows us to head home with a good feeling.”

Contacts:

Jochen Übler Tel.: +49 (0) 7144 302-92 470 jochen.uebler@daimler.com

Baron Smith Tel.: +1 770-705-3537 baron.smith@mbusa.com

Adam Saal Tel.: +1 321-890-2848 saalgoodpr@gmail.com

Further information from Mercedes-Benz, Mercedes-AMG and Mercedes-Benz USA is available on the Internet: www.media.daimler.com, www.mercedes-benz.com and www.mbusa.com.

For more information on AMG Customer Sports, please visit www.mercedes-amg.com/customerracing.