



Media Information

DTM

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The man of the hour in the DTM: An interview with BMW works driver Philipp Eng.

- **BMW works driver Philipp Eng celebrated his first DTM win at Zolder and now heads to Misano as the championship leader.**
- **From Formula BMW to the top of the DTM.**
- **Philipp Eng: “I have wanted to get a DTM win ever since I started racing.”**

Munich. His emotions in the cockpit after crossing the finish line were quite clear. With his first DTM victory in Saturday’s race at Zolder (BEL), a dream came true for BMW works driver Philipp Eng (AUT). On Sunday, the 29-year-old Austrian, who is contesting his second DTM season with BMW Team RBM, finished on the podium again in second place, which saw him take the lead in the DTM driver’s standings.

Eng started his career in motorsport in Formula BMW and, after several years in other race series and cars, returned to BMW in 2016. In his very first year as a BMW works driver, he celebrated victory at the 24 Hours of Spa-Francorchamps (BEL) in the BMW M6 GT3. In 2017, he battled for the title in the ADAC GT Masters with BMW Team Schnitzer right down to the last day of the season.

Eng was added to BMW’s DTM squad in 2018. In only his third DTM race, he celebrated his first podium at the Lausitzring (GER); one day later he brought home his first pole position at the same track. One race weekend later, Eng followed up with his second podium in Budapest (HUN). In addition to his involvement in the BMW DTM team, Eng still contests GT races. 2018 saw him take part in the legendary 24 Hours of Le Mans (FRA) in the BMW M8 GTE of BMW Team MTEK – and celebrate his second overall win at the 24 Hours of Spa-Francorchamps in the BMW M6 GT3 of Walkenhorst Motorsport.

2019 started off with another victory for Eng. With his team-mates Augusto Farfus (BRA), Connor De Philippi (USA) and Colton Herta (USA), he drove to victory in the

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GTLM class at the 24 Hours of Daytona (USA), in the BMW Team RLL BMW M8 GTE. And in the DTM, Eng set a new lap record for closed vehicles in his ZF BMW M4 DTM at the opening weekend at Hockenheim (GER) – when he secured pole position on Sunday. This was followed by the successful weekend at Zolder.

Philipp, you celebrated your first DTM win at Zolder. What was going through your mind as you crossed the finish line?

Philipp Eng: “I just screamed. A great weight has been lifted from my shoulders. I have wanted to get a DTM win ever since I started racing. And for me personally, it has taken a great weight off my mind. Not because anybody was pressuring me, just because I really, really wanted it. It was such a cool feeling. And everyone was really happy for me – it was great to see.”

You talked at length about Charly Lamm after this win. What did he mean to you?

Eng: “A great deal. Charly was a good friend and a very important companion. He was just an incredibly great person. I learned a great deal in the year that I drove for him in the ADAC GT Masters. And not only about motorsport. He always said: ‘You have to be in the right frame of mind.’ That was always our running gag, but it was much more than that. We had a very special, close connection. It was a great loss, and at Zolder I felt him sitting on the passenger seat next to me and keeping his fingers crossed for me.”

In your second DTM year you are now a DTM winner and are currently top of the driver’s championship. But it was far from easy getting to this point. Did you have to overcome a hurdle or two during your career to get where you are now?

Eng: “It all started because I watched karting on TV and I said to my parents that I would like to try it. They made my wish come true and I went to the karting school near Salzburg almost every Tuesday. It was so much fun. So I got really involved in karting and did really well internationally. After my 2004 win at the Italian Open Masters, Red Bull added me to their Junior team. That is what enabled me to get involved in single-seater racing. Without this support I would never have sat in a racing car because my parents are just regular people. They always did everything in

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their power for me, but it was clear from the start that they wouldn't sell the shirt off their back. It was a difficult time for me when I lost the Red Bull drive. I just wasn't good enough at that point. I totally understood the decision, because at that time I wasn't what they were looking for. But naturally it was difficult to find a budget again after that."

How did things progress for you from there?

Eng: "Peter Mücke helped us a great deal at that time, and I was able to keep racing in Formula BMW. I finished third in the overall standings and won the Formula BMW World Final. The reward was driving the Formula 1 car in Mexico City, and I will never forget that day. Plans to race in Formula 3 after that came to nothing, so I competed in Formula BMW for Peter Mücke again. He was an important guide on my journey. Then I raced in Formula 2 in 2009 and 2010, but the financial situation there was strained at times as well. My parents pitched in once again, and different people helped me here and there. 2010 really was a character building year because I would travel to the races and sometimes I wouldn't know on Thursday if I would be able to race on the Friday. So it became clear that Formula 1 wasn't going to happen. I was already 21 back then. And from that point on, I really wanted to make it to the DTM; that was my major goal. Initially, I competed in various Porsche one-make cups and the GT Masters – and then I became a BMW works driver."

Was being signed as a BMW works driver the breakthrough in your career?

Eng: "Definitely. I was successful in the one-make cups in 2014 and 2015, but the big breakthrough was very clearly signing my works contract. I always wanted to drive for BMW, partly because I had been a BMW Junior. So, I took my first steps with BMW Motorsport, and that everything has come full circle, culminating in the DTM win, is super cool. And I hope that there is even more to come."

What did you learn in your first year in the DTM that you can put into practice now?

Eng: "A great deal. A large part of that was getting to know all the processes and procedures at a DTM weekend. Crucial for the current success is that I know to do this and that at this point and that point. Particularly when it comes to working with my engineer. That we always communicate well and always find the right time to

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take a step forward. It was difficult at the very beginning because I learned that at a DTM race weekend a great deal is about organising yourself so I had to get used to that first. It all gives you a routine and self-confidence. And I think that is a great difference this year compared with last year.”

How are you working on yourself to become an even better driver?

Eng: “I am extremely motivated to continuously improve myself. I spend a lot of time with the team, I spend a lot of time in the simulator, I’m on my bike a lot, or outside in the mountains. I want to get better every day and keep learning something new. Hopefully that will end up making me another half a tenth of a second faster.”

What is your strategy for when things don’t go according to plan?

Eng: “I always ask myself the question: Can I influence this – yes or no? If, for example, like at the start of the race weekend at Hockenheim, there is a problem with the car, I can’t influence that at all. Then I simply trust my engineers and mechanics. That’s all I can do in that situation – as well as creating a positive atmosphere of course. When it comes to me: These days, I am much more chilled when I fail. It comes with success and with experience of how to handle failure. Fortunately, it doesn’t happen all that often, but I have a good method for getting out of it quickly. After all, there isn’t usually much time between two races. So it doesn’t do any good if you spend three days burying your head in the sand. Rather, after you have left the racetrack, you need to shrug it off and say to yourself: Things turned out that way and next time things will be better again. I always try to remain very positive.”

In January it was the class win at Daytona, now your first DTM win and leading the championship, on top of this, iconic races such as Le Mans and the 24 Hours Nürburgring are planned in addition to the DTM. Has this been the perfect year for you so far?

Eng: “It’s not only the results that have made this year an absolute dream. I’m contesting the DTM and am in action in the main events in the GT works commitments – that alone is fantastic. The fact that we started the year with the class win at Daytona was incredibly cool. I hope that the story isn’t over yet. We still have two very important 24-hour races in direct succession, but first things first, we are focussed on Misano.”

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What is your objective for Misano and the rest of the season?

Eng: "I think that in the DTM, you just need to try to be consistently up there at the front and consistently picking up points. You don't necessarily have to win every race, you just need to always be in the top four or top five. It is also important to pick up points in qualifying. That is my primary objective."

How do you achieve it?

Eng: "By keeping on doing what we have been doing, and not trying to reinvent the wheel, rather focussing on the basics, which is good preparation and a simple, but confident approach to the races."

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