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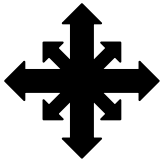
**THILENIUS GROUP Makes Debut in Aston Martin GT4 Vantage and Finishes
Second in Rowe 6 Hour ADAC Ruhr – Pokal – Rennen**



Hey! After a less than satisfying run in the 24-hour race in May, I returned to the Nurburgring August 2-3 for the **Rowe 6 Hour ADAC Ruhr – Pokal – Rennen**. If driving the Nurburgring were not incentive enough, this weekend I got to make my debut in the **Aston Martin Racing GT4 Vantage**, the car that won the SP8T class in the 2019 Nurburgring 24 hour. My co-driver, Marco Müller, and I overcame changing weather conditions and contact early in the race to finish second in the SP8T class.



Stepping up to the all-new **Aston Martin Racing GT4 Vantage** was a big challenge. For the past three seasons, I have been racing the older **Vantage GT8**, a racecar developed from a production car. With the emergence of a global classification for GT4 class cars, manufacturers have universally developed purpose built racecars. **Aston Martin** is no exception and the **GT4 Vantage** is a serious racecar. I counted 38 switches, knobs, buttons and levers in the cockpit. Add to that a multi-page dash display, two LED



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displays showing rear wheel spin and a rearview camera screen telling the driver how fast the cars behind you are going and you have a recipe for information overload. I was on a steep learning curve in the Friday practice, but made good progress getting comfortable with the controls while learning the handling characteristics and figuring out the correct gearing for the roughly 150 corners around the Nordschleife!

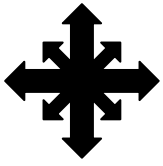
To insure I would never feel completely comfortable, Mother Nature soaked the track overnight for qualifying on Saturday morning. I took a conservative approach, adjusted the ABS and traction control for the conditions and completed two laps before turning the car over to Marco. Marco's best time placed us 67th overall, fourth in the SP8T.



The forecast called for the weather to clear throughout the day, but the experience I gained in qualifying on the wet track paid dividends immediately as the rain continued to fall when I took the green flag for the first time in the **GT4 Vantage**. After the first lap, with over 140 cars on the track, it was clear the track was going to dry. Keeping up with the ABS and traction control settings proved crucial in the changing conditions to maximize performance and extend the life of the rain tires. In retrospect, the track dried quicker than I anticipated. I probably should have pitted for slicks after three laps, but tortured my **Dunlop** rain tires for an additional lap before pitting for slicks and a full tank of fuel.

Our plan was for me to run a full stint of eight laps before turning the car over to Marco. One of the biggest difficulties with the Nurburgring is the length of the lap and the therefore the lack of repetition. With a new car and a constantly changing track, every corner was a learning experience. Another immense challenge of racing on the Nurburgring is managing traffic, both faster and slower. The differences in speed between classes can be significant. The **GT4 Vantage** is undeniably a quick car, but our fastest laps are 40 to 50 seconds a lap slower than the fastest GT3 cars!

As I came to terms with the capability of the **GT4 Vantage**, my confidence grew and my pace improved. Exiting Exmühle, six laps into the stint, we were running P3 and making inroads on P2 when I encountered some slower traffic. I was able to clear the traffic before the Lauda Kink, checked my rearview camera and saw a GT3 BMW approaching from the rear. The BMW was catching me, but was still quite far back when I braked for



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Bergwerk. I turned into the corner on the normal racing line and the BMW made contact with me in the right door. The **GT4 Vantage** oversteered and contacted the guardrail on the outside of the corner with the left rear.

I recovered quickly and radioed the situation to the team. I do not believe the BMW intended to hit me. The BMW driver simply misjudged his braking and closing speed. It was a silly mistake given the long uphill straight after Bergwerk. Fortunately, the damage to the **GT4 Vantage**, while significant, was mostly cosmetic. I returned to the pits at a reduced pace while the BMW retired on the spot with front suspension damage.

When I returned to the pits, my **Aston Martin Racing** team wheeled the car into the garage and in no time addressed the damage, changed the tires, refueled the car and had us back on track with Marco at the wheel. Marco turned in a great stint and showed good pace throughout. Eight laps later, another flawless pit stop saw me back

on track with a new set of **Dunlop** tires and a full tank of fuel. After another eight laps, we were P2 in class when I pitted to turn the car back over to Marco to take to the checkered flag. We fell to P3 during the pit stop, but Marco chased down the Mercedes in P2 and built a gap that allowed us to stop for a splash of fuel with two laps to go. We rolled over the finish line P2 in class and 42nd overall.

What a great team effort and recovery to finish second! Big thanks to Marco for a great drive and to the team for getting us back on track so quickly. I am thrilled with my first experience in the **Aston Martin Racing GT4 Vantage** and cannot wait to get back to Germany for another crack at the Nurburgring.

About THILENIUS GROUP

THILENIUS GROUP, LLC based in California provides vehicle dynamics engineering, motorsports and sports marketing services. With over 30 years experience engineering vehicle dynamics at the OEM level, road racing motorsports and sports marketing, THILENIUS GROUP can help you reach your goals. Information about THILENIUS GROUP services is available at www.thileniusgroup.com. Latest updates available on Facebook at www.facebook.com/ThileniusGroup and Twitter at <https://twitter.com/ThileniusGroup>.