



Media Information
BMW Motorsport
28th November 2017

40 years of BMW Motorsport talent promotion: Milestones, anecdotes and quotes.

- **40th anniversary of BMW Motorsport talent promotion draws to a close – a final overview.**
- **The highlights of the anniversary event with a video of historic racing images: <https://youtu.be/01F7HsG0VZI>.**
- **For the best statements from the round table with former and current juniors, see here: <https://youtu.be/hfQ1dLkf7NE>.**

Munich. BMW Motorsport celebrated the 40th anniversary of its talent promotion with a big event in Maisach (GER). BMW Motorsport Director Jens Marquardt, the first generation of the BMW Junior team from 1977 and the current BMW Motorsport Junior Programme recruits came together. This press release contains the best statements from a round table of all participants, a video clip with historic and current images, a brief overview of the history of BMW Motorsport talent promotion, quotes from famous graduates, and more photos from the photoshoot of the event participants with historic and current BMW race cars.

Meeting of generations.

At the anniversary event last week, the very first BMW Juniors and their successors got to know each other at the BMW and MINI Driving Academy premises in Maisach. BMW Motorsport Director Jens Marquardt (GER), Jochen Neerpasch (GER), the founder of BMW Motorsport GmbH and the BMW Junior team, the members of the first BMW Junior team from 1977, Eddie Cheever (USA) and Marc Surer (SUI), the BMW Motorsport Junior of the Year 2014, Jesse Krohn (FIN), and the current BMW Motorsport Juniors Ricky Collard



(GBR), Mikkel Jensen (DEN), Dennis Marschall, (GER), Nico Menzel (GER) and Beitske Visser (NED) were all present.

See here for the highlights video with historic racing scenes:
<https://youtu.be/01F7HsG0VZI>.

See here for an interview with Jens Marquardt and Jochen Neerpasch:
<https://youtu.be/Ne4GOuvVZ90>.

Statements from former and current Juniors from the round table.

Eddie Cheever, BMW Junior 1977:

“It was Jochen Neerpasch and the BMW Junior Team that really got my career going. It was my first opportunity to race under professional conditions. Back then there was nothing anywhere in the world that could have been compared with the BMW Motorsport talent promotion programme. I came to this anniversary event to thank Mr. Neerpasch and BMW.”

“You were all selected for the current BMW Motorsport Junior Programme based on your talent and determination. That means you already have an advantage over everyone who is not part of the programme. Learn from winners who are slightly better than you at what they do.”

Marc Surer, BMW Junior 1977:

“If I hadn’t been included in the BMW Junior team, I wouldn’t have been able to pursue a career in motorsport back then. The good thing about those days was that we were totally free to drive without any restrictions. We might have driven into each other’s cars at times, but we had freedom nonetheless.”

“You are much better prepared for racing these days than we were back then. If only because you start at a much younger age. Then there are the simulators that we didn’t have back then.”



Jesse Krohn, BMW Motorsport Junior of the Year 2014:

“I would love to have been a racing driver in the 70s and 80s. Back then there was no ABS and no traction control. There was just the driver and his car.”

Ricky Collard, BMW Motorsport Junior 2017:

“The current Junior programme is the most important step in all of our careers. Personally, I can say without a doubt that I wouldn’t still be racing without the support from BMW.”

Mikkel Jensen, BMW Motorsport Junior 2017:

“BMW Motorsport works in collaboration with Formula Medicine. That gives us the opportunity to learn mental training techniques in addition to physical training. That really helps with preparing for races.”

Dennis Marschall, BMW Motorsport Junior 2017:

“Teamwork plays a major role in GT racing and thereby also in the BMW Motorsport Junior Programme. When you share the cockpit with another driver, you need to remember to hand over a good car with good tyres. You can’t be egotistical.”

Nico Menzel, BMW Motorsport Junior 2017:

“Some of the young drivers today have lost respect for the danger of getting injured in a race car. Safety aside, you need to remind yourself of the dangers as a driver.”

Beitske Visser, BMW Motorsport Junior 2017:

“Simulator training is part of everyday life for us these days, and is also part of our training. The advantage of this is that you can try out things that would be too risky in real life. You would never risk having an accident on the track to try out a potentially faster line but you can do that in the simulator.”



See here for a video compilation of the best statements from the round table:
<https://youtu.be/hfQ1dLkf7NE>.

Overview of the history of the BMW Motorsport talent promotion programme:

1977: The BMW Junior Team.

Four decades ago, in 1977, initiated by the managing director Jochen Neerpasch, BMW Motorsport GmbH founded the BMW Junior Team. It was the first time in German car racing that a works team had introduced a team entirely consisting of juniors. The first generation of BMW Juniors in 1977 were Marc Surer, Manfred Winkelhock and Eddie Cheever. With their race car, a BMW 320i modified for group 5, they contested the German Racing Championship to prepare the BMW Junior Team for entering the one-make world championship in the future.

1978 – 1982: Formula 2.

The relaxation of the Formula 2 engine regulations in 1973 made the sport more appealing to an increased number of manufacturers, including BMW. With development in the following years, the BMW four-cylinder engine became the benchmark. From 1978 onwards, BMW Juniors also competed in Formula 2. By 1982 drivers with BMW engines had won the European championship a further five times. All of the drivers eventually progressed to Formula 1, which usually incorporated Formula 2 races as part of its weekends.

1991 – 2001: The “First” Formula BMW.

In 1991 BMW and the ADAC joined forces to develop talent. Numerous racing drivers started their careers there. In the debut year of this partnership, Christian Abt won the overall title and the following year Alexander Grau lifted the trophy. The main objective of the competition was to create a level playing field for drivers and teams with a suitable budget, while adhering to all safety regulations. Successful graduates of the driving school include former Formula 1 driver Ralf Schumacher, who made his debut in Formula Junior in 1992, and Christian Klien.



The final title holder, in 2001, was Timo Glock, who now drives for BMW's DTM team. "I was lucky to benefit from BMW Motorsport's talent promotion programme," said Glock. "As such, BMW was instrumental in the way my motorsport career panned out."

2002 – 2010: The “Second” Formula BMW.

For many years Formula BMW was the world leader in entry level formula motor racing. The series took place in Germany, Great Britain, Asia, and the USA. At the early age of 15, junior drivers were able to make their mark in motor racing in FB02s, state-of-the-art identical cars. The talented young drivers proved themselves time and time again within the Formula 1 framework. All of the series comprised a diverse training and coaching programme, as well as the development of promising new talent. The most famous graduate of this elite establishment is four-time Formula 1 world champion Sebastian Vettel. "When I was a young racing driver, I was fortunate enough to be supported by BMW and Red Bull," said Vettel. "Without that support, I would possibly never have made it into Formula 1. I am very grateful for that time, and look back fondly upon it." Further well-known graduates were Nico Rosberg, Nico Hulkenberg, Daniel Ricciardo and Marco Wittmann. From 2005 to 2008 there was an annual Formula BMW World Final, in which junior drivers from the four regional Formula BMW series competed against each other. Between 2008 and 2010 there also was Formula BMW Europe.

2011 – 2013: Formula BMW Talent Cup.

The Formula BMW Talent Cup took place over three seasons. In this educational series, BMW Motorsport systematically introduced talented junior drivers to the requirements of professional motorsport. Driver coaches and race engineers supervised the participants in small groups and worked on everything from individual style of driving through to complete set-up. In 2011 Stefan Wackerbauer was the first overall winner, and in 2012 Marvin Dienst secured the top spot at the final in Oschersleben. Robin Hansson of Sweden triumphed in the third season, in 2013.



From 2014: BMW Motorsport Junior Programme.

Successful graduates are given the opportunity to take the next steps in their development as GT racing drivers at BMW Motorsport. The focus is on GT and touring car drivers who already have some race experience. Outings with the BMW M4 GT4, which replaces the BMW M235i Racing as the starter car for the juniors, are an integral part of the comprehensive training programme. The juniors are also involved in the car's development programme. They could also appear in the BMW M6 GT3. As well as race starts and test drives, intensive theory courses dealing with fitness and PR are planned, as are mental and simulator training. As "BMW Motorsport Junior of the Year 2014", Jesse Krohn has completed the entire programme with success and is now part of the permanent driver line-up for BMW Motorsport in the GT sector.

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