



Media Information
BMW M Motorsport
2nd July 2023

24h Spa-Francorchamps: Philipp Eng, Marco Wittmann and Nick Yelloly triumph for ROWE Racing in the BMW M4 GT3.

- **ROWE Racing secures its third victory as a team at the 24 Hours of Spa-Francorchamps, marking BMW's 25th overall win.**
- **Philipp Eng also clinches his third victory in the endurance classic, while Marco Wittmann and Nick Yelloly achieve their maiden wins.**
- **BMW M Team WRT finishes sixth with the #46 BMW M4 GT3 and lands a podium finish in the Gold Cup with the #30 BMW M4 GT3.**

Spa-Francorchamps. Third triumph for ROWE Racing at the 24 Hours of Spa-Francorchamps (BEL)! In a thrilling race that remained close until the final hour, Philipp Eng (AUT), Marco Wittmann (GER), and Nick Yelloly (GBR) drove the #98 BMW M4 GT3 to victory after completing 537 laps, securing the 25th overall win for BMW, the most successful manufacturer in the event's history. Eng claimed his third Spa triumph for BMW M Motorsport, following his victories in 2016 and 2018. Wittmann celebrated his first win in a 24-hour race ever, while Yelloly crowned a perfect week by adding his second endurance victory after the 24 Hours of Nürburgring (GER) in 2020, which started with his first win in the BMW M Hybrid V8 at Watkins Glen (USA).

During the early stages of the 24-hour race, the BMW M4 GT3 teams had to work their way through the field after missing out on Super Pole due to heavy rain during qualifying. Initially, the BMW M Team WRT #32 BMW M4 GT3 and the #998 BMW M4 GT3 of ROWE Racing made the best progress, quickly battling for the top positions. Meanwhile, the eventual winning car suffered setbacks due to an unfortunate timed pit stop and a problem with the fuel system, causing it to fall far behind. It was only in the evening that car #98 launched an impressive comeback, taking the lead for the first time during the night. That position was briefly threatened by a 30-second time penalty for exceeding track limits, but in the end, Eng, Wittmann, and Yelloly reclaimed the top spot.





In sixth place, the #46 BMW M4 GT3 from BMW M Team WRT, driven by Augusto Farfus (BRA), Maxime Martin (BEL), and Valentino Rossi (ITA), completed the race. They also showed strong speed but were repeatedly set back by time penalties. The #30 BMW M4 GT3 from the WRT team, with Niklas Krütten (GER), Jean-Baptiste Simmenauer (FRA), and Calan Williams (AUS) at the wheel, secured second place in the Gold Cup category, making it onto the podium. The #31 BMW M4 GT3, piloted by Adam Carroll and Lewis Proctor (both GBR) finished 25th overall.

In the twelfth hour of the race, an unfortunate accident occurred between Neil Verhagen (USA) in the #998 BMW M4 GT3 from ROWE Racing and Charles Weerts (BEL) in the #32 BMW M4 GT3 from BMW M Team WRT. One car was directly behind the other, battling for the top positions when race control initiated an unclear Full Course Yellow procedure. That led to a chain of unfortunate circumstances, with both drivers receiving different information about the exact timing of the yellow period. Weerts reduced his speed, catching Verhagen off guard, and preventing him from avoiding a collision with the rear of the WRT car. Both vehicles suffered heavy damage, but fortunately, the drivers remained unharmed. The accident was followed by a roughly two-hour yellow period due to repairs to the barriers. The #35 BMW M4 GT3 from Walkenhorst Motorsport also retired early.

Reactions after the race.

Andreas Roos (Head of BMW M Motorsport): "An incredible weekend with the first victory for our BMW M4 GT3 in one of the major 24-hour classics and the 25th overall win for BMW in the Ardennes! Many thanks to the drivers and the ROWE Racing team for their fantastic performance and to every employee of BMW M Motorsport who contributed to developing such a great GT3 car. The race started off challenging for us after missing out on Super Pole and having to start from the midfield. However, all our crews fought their way up the field during the first few hours of the race. It's a pity that the accident occurred during the night, resulting in the loss of two cars. It was a chain of unfortunate circumstances that we need to examine closely. Unfortunately, the home race for the BMW M Team WRT was disappointing, mainly due to this incident, although the #46 crew achieved a respectable sixth-place finish. I also congratulate the #30 BMW M4 GT3 team on their podium finish in the Gold Cup





category! Additionally, there were reasons to celebrate in the GT4 European Series here at Spa-Francorchamps. Congratulations to the teams and drivers on their victory and podium finishes with the BMW M4 GT4."

Hans-Peter Naundorf (Team Principal, ROWE Racing): "This was our toughest victory here at Spa so far. We know how challenging it is to triumph in this race, which makes it even more special. Our competition was incredibly strong, and the final result was incredibly close. I can't remember a more intense GT race. What impresses me the most is the consistency of our team. We have been on the podium in almost every race we've entered this year. Here at Spa, we have secured three victories and two second places since 2016. This can only be achieved with an incredibly motivated and ambitious team, and that's what we have. I am also pleased to see how valuable this victory is for everyone involved in this project. It was time for the BMW M4 GT3 to win such a significant race in its second year."

Philipp Eng (#98 BMW M4 GT3, ROWE Racing, 1st place): "Winning a 24-hour race is every racing driver's dream, and this is the most difficult GT race to win. Therefore, it means a lot to me to experience this for the third time in my career. It's a great honour for me. The race was anything but easy for us. At one point, we were one lap behind, and there was no indication that we could still win, but the team did a fantastic job to bring us back into the race. The last two hours felt like an eternity."

Marco Wittmann (#98 BMW M4 GT3, ROWE Racing, 1st place): "I've been trying to win a 24-hour race for about ten years now. Finally, it worked out! It's an incredible feeling. A big compliment to the team and my fellow drivers. We had an extremely good package of driver, team, and car that gave me my long-awaited first 24-hour victory."

Nick Yelloly (#98 BMW M4 GT3, ROWE Racing, 1st place): "A fantastic performance from the entire team. To win a race like this, so many things need to come together, and today, they did. Many thanks to everyone who made this success possible! Personally, this is the culmination of an outstanding week that started with the first GTP victory for the BMW M Hybrid V8 at Watkins Glen."





Valentino Rossi (#46 BMW M4 GT3, BMW M Team WRT, 6th place): "I'm happy. It was a positive race for me. It was my second time taking part in the 24 Hours of Spa-Francorchamps. After finishing 17th last year, sixth place was a big step forward this time, but of course we want more and will make another attempt next year. Many thanks to the team and my fellow drivers for their great effort!"

Charles Weerts (#32 BMW M4 GT3, BMW M Team WRT, DNF): "The most important thing is that Neil and I are unharmed after that severe accident. The situation was very confusing, and I can't exactly say what happened. I received the information in the car that a Full Course Yellow was imminent. As a result, I reduced my speed. Neil was right behind me, and he obviously didn't have that information. It was very strange and needs to be investigated thoroughly because something like this is very dangerous and should not happen. I'm extremely disappointed because this is my home race, and I have been hoping to win here for several years. This time, we would have had a good chance."

Neil Verhagen (#998 BMW M4 GT3, ROWE Racing, DNF): "Something went wrong in the communication of the Full Course Yellow before the accident. I didn't have any information that I had to slow down, obviously in contrast to Charles, but I can't say why that was. Everything happened incredibly quickly, and I'm just glad that we drivers are okay. It's extremely unfortunate for BMW M Motorsport to have lost two cars with a chance of winning due to this incident."

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