



24h Nürburgring

**Highs and lows for BMW teams as the new BMW M6 GT3 makes its 24-hour debut – ROWE Racing fifth with the number 23 car.**

Nürburgring (DE), 29<sup>th</sup> May 2016. The number 23 BMW M6 GT3 was the best-placed BMW at the Nürburgring 24 Hours (DE): Last-stint driver Dirk Werner (DE) crossed the finish line in fifth place overall after 133 laps. He had shared the driving duties with Alexander Sims (GB), Philipp Eng (AT) and Maxime Martin (BE) during the race. The quartet came home one lap behind the winning Mercedes.

The two Walkenhorst Motorsport BMW M6 GT3s both finished in the top 30: the number 999 car, with Victor Bouveng (SE), Tom Blomqvist (GB), Christian Krognæs (NO) and Michele di Martino (DE) at the wheel, lost several laps while the car was being repaired during the night, but fought back to finish 12<sup>th</sup>. The number 101 car, driven by Matias Henkola (FI), Kazunori Yamauchi (JP), Max Sandritter (DE) and George Richardson (GB), ended the race in 22<sup>nd</sup>.

This was the BMW M6 GT3's first outing at this endurance classic – and the Nürburgring-Nordschleife lived up to its nickname of the "Green Hell" on several occasions on the car's debut. With torrential rain and hail at the start, a race interruption, many incidents and countless twists in the ever-fascinating storyline, the race at the 25.378-kilometre circuit once again proved to be a unique challenge. Unfortunately, the BMW M6 GT3 teams were often left to rue the unpredictability of this event.

For a long time, the number 100 Schubert Motorsport BMW M6 GT3 was on course for a podium finish, until Lucas Luhr (DE) was hit by a slower car on the Grand Prix circuit shortly after 09:00. He hit the crash barriers hard, but fortunately emerged from the crash unhurt. At the time of the incident, Luhr and his fellow drivers John Edwards (US), Jens Klingmann (DE) and Martin Tomczyk (DE) were running third in the BMW M6 GT3.

For the second ROWE Racing car, the number 22 BMW M6 GT3, the race came to a premature end in the early hours of Sunday morning: Klaus Graf (DE), who had alternated at the wheel with Richard Westbrook (GB), Nicky Catsburg (NL) and Markus Palttala (FI), was forced to retire following a collision with a slower car in the Hatzenbach section of the circuit. The number 22 had led the race for a while early on.

The 44<sup>th</sup> staging of the Eifel marathon also took a disappointing turn for Augusto Farfus (BR), Jesse Krohn (FI), Jörg Müller (DE) and Marco Wittmann (DE). An engine failure caused Müller to park the leading number 18 BMW M6 GT3 at the side of the track on Saturday. The Schubert team worked through the night to repair the car, meaning the quartet was at least able to re-join the race on Sunday morning.

Victory in the Cup 5 class went to Michael Schrey (DE), Alexander Mies (DE), Emin Akata (DE) and Dries Vanthoor (BE) in the number 305 BMW M235i Racing fielded by the Bonk Motorsport team. In doing so, they extended their winning run in the 2016 BMW M235i Racing Cup, which forms part of the VLN Endurance



Championship. In total, 13 cars were in action in this class. First place in the class was a strong 25<sup>th</sup> place overall.

**Selected quotes from the 24-hour race:**

**Jens Marquardt (BMW Motorsport Director):**

“Naturally we are somewhat disappointed with the race result and had hoped for more on the BMW M6 GT3's debut at this endurance classic. But that's how it is in endurance racing, especially here at the Nordschleife: You can plan preparation, and a race strategy – but not how the race will go. And once again the Nürburgring pretty much offered everything that has made it legendary; sun, rain, hail, extreme weather conditions and interruption of the race. And, unfortunately, luck wasn't on our side. At times we were able to show the potential of the BMW M6 GT3, and were even in the lead. Then technical issues and two accidents meant that in the course of the race we only had one car left in the leading group. Unfortunately, that wasn't enough with the strong competition. Which was very strong, much stronger than in the warm-up races. However, our performances in the first VLN races spoke for themselves: We showed what we were capable of achieving. I would like to say a big well done to our teams. Even though the result didn't reflect this, Schubert Motorsport, ROWE Racing and Walkenhorst Motorsport delivered a fantastic, flawless performance, and the same is true of our driver line-up. The teamwork was a lot of fun and I am already looking forward to next year. I'm confident that then we will get a result that is a fairer reflection on our teams, the drivers and the BMW M6 GT3. Congratulations to Mercedes-Benz on its win.”

**Alexander Sims (ROWE Racing, number 23 BMW M6 GT3, 5<sup>th</sup> place):**

“I think we did the best we could given the circumstances. It wasn't a smooth race for anyone. The weather was just crazy. Then there was the interruption and a turbulent restart. We had a great comeback and battled our way into fifth place. I'm proud of the whole team.”

**Dirk Werner (ROWE Racing, number 23 BMW M6 GT3, 5<sup>th</sup> place):**

“We battled and gave it our all. In these difficult conditions, the main thing was to make it through the race. We managed that. Our team did a great job. It's a shame that we dropped down into 50<sup>th</sup> place on the restart. This meant that it wasn't possible to finish even further up the field. I retired early in the two previous years, so it feels good that we finished in fifth place this time. The Nordschleife did what it felt like once again.”

**Philipp Eng (ROWE Racing, number 23 BMW M6 GT3, 5<sup>th</sup> place):**

“Mercedes was very strong this time around. Which is why we can be pleased that we were at the front of the field of the other manufacturers. Unfortunately, we lost exactly the same amount of time at the start that we trailed by at the end. Otherwise, the BMW M6 GT3 was extremely reliable and delivered a fantastic performance. A huge well-done to the entire team once again. They really did a perfect job, in particular with our problem at the start.”



**Maxime Martin (ROWE Racing, number 23 BMW M6 GT3, 5<sup>th</sup> place):**

"The result is definitely okay after a race like this one. But, of course, I would have preferred it if we had finished a bit further up the field. Unfortunately, the technical problem at the restart cost us time. If it hadn't been for that, we would have been able to fight for a spot on the podium. Now we will work hard to make sure that 2017 is even better. The BMW M6 GT3 definitely has the potential."

**Tom Blomqvist (Walkenhorst Motorsport, number 999 BMW M6 GT3, 12<sup>th</sup> place):**

"I've never experienced a race like this one before. Everything here is unique. It was a fantastic experience. Unfortunately, a problem meant that we lost four laps in the pit. If it hadn't been for that, then we would have been able to finish further up the field. The BMW M6 GT3 was fast. I'm just happy that we made it to the end after this incredible race."

**Augusto Farfus (Schubert Motorsport, number 18 BMW M6 GT3, 120<sup>th</sup> place):**

"It obviously hurt to be denied any chance of a good result relatively early in the race. We were leading at the time of the engine problem, and had very good speed. We still had that pace after the overnight repairs. I would like to pay a big compliment to the Schubert Motorsport team. They worked hard all night to get our car back out onto the track. For me, they are the real heroes."

**Lucas Luhr (Schubert Motorsport, number 100 BMW M6 GT3, DNF):**

"I am a positive person, so I will take the positives from this race. The brand-new BMW M6 GT3 proved its potential and showed that it is competitive on the Nordschleife. We can build on that, looking ahead. The collision was obviously unnecessary. The other car came from nowhere and ploughed into me. I had no chance, and it was a big impact. It is a shame that we were unable to convert the strong performance we showed over the course of the race into a good result."

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**Results from the Nürburgring 24 Hours:**

**Number 23 BMW M6 GT3, ROWE Racing, 5<sup>th</sup> place**

Alexander Sims (GB), Philipp Eng (AT), Maxime Martin (BE), Dirk Werner (DE)

**Number 999 BMW M6 GT3, Walkenhorst Motorsport powered by Dunlop, 12<sup>th</sup> place**

Victor Bouveng (SE), Tom Blomqvist (GB), Christian Krognen (NO), Michele di Martino (DE)

**Number 101 BMW M6 GT3, Walkenhorst Motorsport powered by Dunlop, 22<sup>nd</sup> place**

Matias Henkola (FI), Kazunori Yamauchi (JP), Max Sandritter (DE), George Richardson (GB)

**Number 18 BMW M6 GT3, Schubert Motorsport, 120<sup>th</sup> place**

Augusto Farfus (BR), Jesse Krohn (FI), Jörg Müller (DE), Marco Wittmann (DE)



**Number 22 BMW M6 GT3, ROWE Racing, DNF**

Klaus Graf (DE), Richard Westbrook (GB), Nicky Catsburg (NL), Markus Palttala (FI)

**Number 100 BMW M6 GT3, Schubert Motorsport, DNF**

John Edwards (US), Jens Klingmann (DE), Lucas Luhr (DE), Martin Tomczyk (DE)

**Number 99 BMW Z4 GT3, Walkenhorst Motorsport powered by Dunlop, DNF**

Henry Walkenhorst (DE), Peter Posavac (DE), Daniela Schmid (DE), Jaap van Lagen (NL)

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