



Media Information
BMW Motorsport
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An interview with Ricky Collard: “I will do everything I can to get to the DTM.”

- **Part six of the interview series with the BMW Motorsport Juniors.**
- **Ricky Collard competed with the BMW M6 GT3 in the 2017 ADAC GT Masters.**
- **Collard: “I am very happy to have driven with a legendary team like Schnitzer.”**

Munich. Six promising talented youngsters are part of the BMW Motorsport Junior Programme in the 2017 season. They are all at the start of their careers, but already have an interesting background behind them. As part of a series of interviews, we introduce the individual BMW Motorsport Juniors. This time: Ricky Collard (GBR).

Ricky Collard (GBR) produced some convincing performances in formula racing early in his career, before becoming part of the BMW Motorsport Junior Programme in April 2016. Since then, he has been gaining experience in GT and touring car racing, following the path taken by his father Rob, who has been competing successfully with BMW cars in the British Touring Car Championship (BTCC) since 2008. In 2017, Ricky Collard competed in the BMW M6 GT3 for BMW Team Schnitzer, in the ADAC GT Masters. Together with Jörg Müller (GER) and Jens Klingmann (GER), he also took part in the 24 Hours of Dubai (UAE), which saw the race debut for the BMW M4 GT4. During the DTM Young Driver tests in 2016, he had the opportunity to gain experience behind the wheel of the BMW M4 DTM.



Ricky, your father is a successful touring car driver. Did he introduce you to motorsport?

Ricky Collard: "Actually, my grandfather was more responsible for that than my father. The motorsport story started with him. My father had bought me football boots, but I wasn't interested in that. I had always gone to watch my father and my grandfather racing, so I wanted to race as well. I started off with motocross bikes and then switched to dirt bikes, offroad buggies and karts. From there, I moved into professional karting, on local circuits just at weekends, as school and education were important to my parents. I then moved on from club and national level, up to European and worldwide kart racing. I had a serious accident but I managed to make my comeback and began racing in Formula Ford, Formula 4 and Formula 3 in England. I finished second three-times in three years, in three championships, and then I made it to the BMW Motorsport Junior Programme."

How did you father and grandfather support your career choice after you had decided to concentrate on motorsport?

Collard: "Motorsport can be very expensive, so it was really important that they helped me financially with the racing. But they were also helpful as mentors. My grandfather was hot rod world champion after all. My father was always very tough. While my grandfather was just as strict, he perhaps wasn't quite as tough as my father, who also pushed me to fight harder. My grandfather was always very proud, and happy. When I joined the BMW Motorsport Junior Programme, he said to me that I had to move to BMW and take it seriously. That is why I prioritised BMW, and I have been able to drive in DTM tests and GT tests at a young age. I have also had support from mentors like Jörg Müller or Dirk Adorf, and some other great personalities. BMW does a very good job in that respect."

How did this contact with BMW come about?

Collard: "After a really successful year in the British Formula 4 series, I was invited to go to Munich and talk about my plans with the management of the Junior Programme. I also met up with other Juniors. Later on, we had a shoot-out with six other Juniors in Dijon. Those two days were very successful for me and afterwards I was asked whether I wanted to join the programme and become a



BMW Motorsport Junior. I was delighted, and then I finished second in the British Formula 3 series. I chose not to race in formula cars this year, so I could concentrate fully on BMW. Now I am driving GT cars and I was in action in the DTM race taxi in Moscow. I have won my first race in the ADAC GT Masters and I am very happy to have driven with a legendary team like Schnitzer.”

Your long-time colleague Lando Norris became European Formula 3 champion this year, and now he is knocking on the door of Formula 1. However, you have decided to move to race cars. Are you happy with that decision?

Collard: “I have gone up against some very strong competitors during my career. Lando was my team-mate and is now on his way to Formula 1. I have also driven with Max Verstappen. I beat Lando quite often but we are good friends, regardless of our on-track rivalry. I am really happy for him now that he has a contract with McLaren and is going to be a Formula 1 test driver. GT racing is good for me and it is fun to drive, especially in an unbelievable team like Schnitzer, with Charly Lamm and all the mechanics who do such a professional job. Of course, it would have been great to continue driving formula cars this year, maybe in the European Formula 3 Championship or GP3, as well as competing in GT races. But that would have been very difficult, and very expensive. I come from a farming family - we keep cows and pigs so that makes it difficult to get the money together for racing. I am happy and of course I will do everything I can to get to the DTM, and to concentrate on that and on Formula E. I want to convince everyone that I have everything required to earn that place.”

How do you get on with the other Juniors?

Collard: “I think that we are all good friends, and we have a lot of respect for one another but when we are out on the track, we want to beat the competition. We are on the right track and want to show everyone that we have earned the right to drive for BMW. Unfortunately, I have not been driving so much with the other Juniors this year, as I was mainly competing in the Schnitzer car with Philipp Eng.”



How would you describe your character in three words - on and off the racetrack?

Collard: "Fiery, thrilling and professional."

What do you do apart from racing?

Collard: "I work full-time for my father's demolition company, driving dumper trucks for example. I also spend a lot of time in the simulator, and I work on my fitness. I like to ride my mountain bike and I am a fan of extreme sports - anything that is a bit mad."

And what about football?

Collard: "Not so much, I've got two left feet."

Do you have any motorsport role models?

Collard: "One of my most important sponsors is Nicky Grist, who was co-driver for Colin McRae. Colin was inspirational for me in terms of motorsport, thanks to his passion and his ability to give everything, right when it was required. Nicky has shared a few personal stories with me, about how mad he was and what he had to do to become world champion."

What have been the best and worst moments of your career?

Collard: "That's quite an odd one for me. My serious karting accident is simultaneously the best and worst moment of my career. I drove into Max Verstappen, and Lance Stroll, who is also in Formula 1 now, smashed into me. I broke a few vertebrae, five ribs, my collarbone, and broke my shoulder in two places. I also had a ruptured lung and internal bleeding. I was in hospital in Italy for about three months and had to use a respirator, as I was not able to breath properly. My whole family came over and it was a really tough time for all of us, as there was a chance that I might not make it. However, it all turned out well in the end as I made a full recovery and managed to make a comeback thanks to sheer willpower. Many people told me that I would never return to a race car and advised me to practice with my left foot and play football instead. But I just wanted to get back into a car and prove to everyone that I could put such a



serious accident behind me. I think that I came back stronger after the accident and I had plenty of time to think about what to do with my career and what I wanted to achieve. Maybe being able to make a comeback after such a short period makes the accident the best moment of my career, as I was able to turn something so bad into a positive experience.”

Press contact.

BMW Sports Communication
Jörg Kottmeier
Phone: +49 (0) 170 – 566 6112
E-Mail: joerg.kottmeier@bmw.de

Ingo Lehbrink
Phone: +49 (0) 176 – 203 40224
E-Mail: ingo.lehbrink@bmw.de

Daniela Maier
Phone: +49 (0) 151 – 601 24545
E-Mail: daniela.maier@bmw.de

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