



American Le Mans Series

Joey Hand and Dirk Müller finish second for BMW Team RLL in Long Beach.

Munich, 15th April 2012. With a second-place GT class finish by the no. 56 BMW M3 GT in the second round of the American Le Mans Series at Long Beach (US), BMW is now tied for the manufacturer's point lead. The second podium of the young ALMS season for Joey Hand (US) and Dirk Müller (DE) solidifies their lead in the driver's standings.

The defending GT driver co-champions started the race from the class pole with Hand at the wheel of the no. 56 BMW M3 GT. He led the race for the opening 16 laps until a prototype ran into him causing a puncture of the right rear tyre. Hand pitted for fuel and four new tyres, returning to the race in the seventh. The races only caution period brought him back to the pits on lap 41 where Team Principal Bobby Rahal made a bold strategic move to not change tyres and jump the field in the pits to send the BMW Motorsport driver out in the lead. Müller lost the lead, but drove a strong stint to extend BMW Team RLL's Long Beach podium streak to four years.

Team-mates Bill Auberlen (US) and Jörg Müller (DE), driving the no. 55 BMW M3 GT, finished out of the points in 11th. Müller, making his first start at Long Beach, was the victim of a first lap accident that forced him to the pits for lengthy repairs to replace the radiator. He returned 13 laps down to the leaders, but put his head down, setting some of the fastest laps of that part of the race. He handed off to Auberlen during the race's only caution period and the Californian, who had finished in the top-3 here in both 2009 and 2010, did not disappoint his home race fans as he circulated at a very fast pace until the chequered flag.

Bobby Rahal (Team Principal):

"A great day for Dunlop. We double-stinted the tyres at Sebring and that's what got us the win. Here we asked for the same thing. There was no question that we had to leap frog the field after being hit and having a flat tyre. We didn't have enough to beat the no. 4 Corvette, but we held everyone else off. We'll take a well-deserved second place."

Dirk Müller (BMW M3 GT – No. 56):

"That race was certainly was another mileage test for Dunlop. Bobby and Chris made the right call and it paid off. I knew I had to go a full stint on tyres that had already gone 25 laps so I focused on their management – not what was behind me."

Joey Hand (BMW M3 GT – No. 56):

"We won the race at Sebring by double stinting tyres and we placed here the same way. It says a lot to have that kind of confidence in a tyre that not only has the performance, but it will also go the distance. I know I can't win the Championship again this year, but I really, really want to do my best to help the team, BMW and Dirk repeat."



Jörg Müller (BMW M3 GT – No. 55):

“It’s disappointing that I got trapped in an accident on the second lap. The Corvette braked very hard and I had nowhere to go. We had to change the radiator so we lost many laps. Afterwards the car was still fast. It’s a shame when you have the real potential to win the race and you don’t get any points.”

Bill Auberlen (BMW M3 GT – No. 55):

“The No. 55 M3 was a rocket ship today, but you need luck at Long Beach. Traffic got stacked up and Jörg got into it. The radiator was damaged, but after he went back out he was the fastest car on the track. It hurts to know how hard everybody worked and that we had a car that could win, but could not show it.”

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