



24h Nürburgring

BMW sends strong contingent to the 24-hour race at the Nordschleife – BMW Z4 GT3 well prepared for the classic.

Munich, 15th May 2012. The BMW Z4 GT3 is ready for possibly its greatest challenge of the 2012 motorsport season: this coming weekend, the iconic Nürburgring-Nordschleife (DE) will provide the stage for the 24-hour race for the 40th time. BMW is closely associated with this event, which was held for the first time in 1970. To date, the company has no fewer than 19 overall victories in the “Green Hell” to its name, making BMW by far the most successful brand in the history of this race. This year, countless teams will once again line up with BMW racing cars at the Nürburgring, and will be looking to write the next chapter in this unique success story. Taking centre stage is the BMW Z4 GT3, with which – among others – two teams supported by BMW Motorsport will be challenging for win number 20: BMW Team Schubert and BMW Team Vita4One.

Jörg Müller (DE), Dirk Müller (DE) and Uwe Alzen (DE) will line up in the number 19 BMW Z4 GT3 for BMW Team Schubert. With almost 200 cars starting in the Eifel Mountains, the three BMW works drivers form one of the most experienced driving teams. Jörg Müller (2004, 2010) and Alzen (2000, 2010) have both triumphed twice on the Nürburgring-Nordschleife, while Dirk Müller also knows how it feels to climb onto the top step of the podium, having tasted victory in 2004. Claudia Hürtgen (DE), Dominik Schwager (DE), Nico Bastian (DE) and Dirk Adorf (DE) will alternate behind the wheel of the sister car, number 20. Adorf is also registered for the number 19 car.

BMW Team Vita4One lines up with the number 17 BMW Z4 GT3 and drivers Pedro Lamy (PT), Mathias Lauda (AT), Ricardo van der Ende (NL) and Frank Kechele (DE). Car number 18 will be driven by BMW Motorsport test and development driver Marco Wittmann (DE), Jens Klingmann (DE) and Richard Göransson (SE). Like Adorf in BMW Team Schubert, Lamy is registered for both cars. The privately run Marc VDS Racing team completes the strong BMW contingent in the fiercely-competitive SP9 class, and will also send a BMW Z4 GT3 into action. Bas Leinders (BE), Markus Palttala (FI) and Maxime Martin (BE) will share the driving duties. Michael Bartels’ (DE) team has already tasted success in the hard-fought Blancpain Endurance Series this season.

The official entry list for the 24-hour race includes a total of 49 BMW cars, with BMW drivers represented in nine classes. The largest contingents of the manufacturer’s racing cars can be found in the V4, V5 and V6 categories: eight BMW cars will be battling for the top positions in each of these classes. The diverse range of BMW vehicles lining up at this year’s race is equally as impressive. Just short of 20 different BMW models will be appearing in the “Green Hell”

If the races in the VLN Endurance Championship are any indication of how competitive the cars will be at 24-hour races, then BMW fans can look forward to an exciting weekend: at least one of the BMW Z4 GT3 cars run by BMW Team Schubert has made it onto the podium at each of the three races so far, with Jörg Müller, Dirk Müller and Dirk Adorf winning the season-opener. The BMW Z4 GT3 has also celebrated victories in other championships held in accordance with GT3



regulations, including the FIA GT1 World Championship, the Blancpain Endurance Series, the ADAC GT Masters, and national GT series like those held in Great Britain, Japan and Brazil.

BMW's record on the previous 39 occasions the Nürburgring has hosted the 24-hour race is nothing short of impressive. As well as 19 overall victories – eight of which were one-tuos – the brand also has 150 class wins to its name. The second-placed manufacturer in the all-time best list for class victories could manage no more than 53. The first running of the race back in 1970 was won by two BMW drivers: Clemens Schickentanz (DE) and Hans-Joachim Stuck (DE) in a BMW 2002 ti. In 1998, Andreas Bovensiepen (DE), Marc Duez (BE), Christian Menzel (DE) and Stuck claimed the first victory at this event in a car with a diesel engine – the BMW 320d. BMW most recently crossed the finish line in first place in 2010: Augusto Farfus (BR), Jörg Müller, Uwe Alzen and Pedro Lamy guided their BMW M3 GT to overall victory in a dramatic finale. Last year, the quartet finished runners-up. The BMW M3 has ten victories at the Nürburgring to its name. On the 40th anniversary of BMW M, it is the BMW Z4 GT3 that is the most promising candidate for the next win. A 4.4-litre eight-cylinder engine provides the necessary power. BMW Motorsport has systematically further developed the car for the 2012 season. The engine now achieves up to 9,000 rpm and has been given a new exhaust system. The rear wing is made of carbon fibre instead of aluminium and offers greater downforce and less air resistance at the same time.

The brake cooling on the front axle has also been optimised and a new rear axle differential is now in operation. The larger tank, with a capacity of 115 litres, gives the teams greater tactical leeway over the course of the 24-hour race. In the 2012 version of the BMW Z4 GT3, the pedal system can be moved and adjusted to suit the driver's individual needs.

Jens Marquardt (BMW Motorsport Director):

“The 24-hour race at the Nürburgring is a very special event for us. The enthusiasm the fans show towards BMW is more tangible there than at almost any other race. Traditionally, almost a third of the starting field is made up of BMW privateers, which just goes to show the huge importance for BMW Customer Racing. The crowds are there to enjoy a huge motorsport party – out on the track, we are obviously keen to give them a few good reasons to celebrate. It is hard to predict the balance of power. There are a lot of GT3 cars there that could challenge for the overall victory, and then there is bound to be the odd surprise package. During our preparations, we have seen that the BMW Z4 GT3 performs very well on the Nordschleife. If our teams are to be in with a shout, then everything must come together. Only those who complete the marathon without any major mistakes have any chance of scoring a really top result. I have every faith that we can do just that. Fans of BMW M are once again in for a real treat, as the M Festival returns in 2012. It goes without saying that we want a good result to celebrate the 40th anniversary of M. That is why our drivers and teams are working so hard. However, we are all aware that the Nordschleife has its own rules. I will be following the race closely from Brands Hatch.”



Jörg Müller (BMW Team Schubert, car number 19):

"The 24-hour race is unique. Every year without fail I look forward to being a part of this classic and experiencing the fans' enthusiasm at close hand. Victory at the VLN season-opener and pole position in the third round has definitely shown what a good basis the BMW Z4 GT3 provides for the outing on the Nordschleife. In order to convert this potential into a good race result, however, everything must come together perfectly. Perfect teamwork is the platform for success – and I have absolutely nothing to worry about in that regard with BMW Team Schubert."

Uwe Alzen (BMW Team Schubert, car number 19):

"Even after so many years, the Nürburgring 24 Hours is still the biggest race there is for me. I would even put it above Le Mans in my personal list of favourite events. It is hard to say where we stand compared to the opposition. We will only get a really clear picture once we are a few hours into the race. There are a lot of strong cars in the SP9 class. However, neither BMW Team Schubert nor we drivers have anything to be afraid of."

Dirk Adorf (BMW Team Schubert, car number 19/20):

"The 24-hour race is always a highlight for me. There is a great atmosphere around the circuit. What make it so attractive are the many different cars and the quality of the drivers. It is an amazing feeling to drive on the Nordschleife at night, when you can smell the barbecues and see the camp fires. This race is a real adventure. This year will be my 20th start at the Nürburgring 24 Hours, and I would like to celebrate my first win at last. However, there are a lot of other drivers and teams with exactly the same goal. The BMW Z4 GT3 is a reliable car and has the necessary speed, so I hope we can have a say in what happens at the front of the field."

Claudia Hürtgen (BMW Team Schubert, car number 20):

"The 24-hour race is the highlight of the 2012 season. We have been preparing intensely for it. A podium finish is a realistic target. Of course, the top step is always the best. You also need a bit of luck at a 24-hour race, however. If we can get through without any problems, then we are definitely capable of achieving great things."

Marco Wittmann (BMW Team Vita4One, car number 18):

"I have driven in the VLN Endurance Championship to get a feel for the Nordschleife. The four-hour races are also a good basis with which to prepare for the long-distance marathon. It is all about perfecting procedures during pit stops, technical things, and the interaction with your fellow drivers. You are simply trying to eliminate as many possible sources of errors as possible. We have a good package. The preparatory races all went positively. I am now really looking forward to my first 24-hour race in the Eifel Mountains."

Richard Göransson (BMW Team Vita4One, car number 18):

"For me, it is always fantastic to travel to the Nürburgring 24 Hours. We have a great car, a great team, and I have good team-mates, with whom I will hopefully challenge for a great result. The team does not have a huge amount of experience on the Nordschleife. That is why we have tried, successfully, to get to know both the car and the circuit during the preparations."



Pedro Lamy (BMW Team Vita4One, car number 17/18):

"It is nice to return to the Nordschleife. In the past, I have always been competitive there with BMW and have achieved good results. I hope the same can be said again this year. I am very happy with the BMW Z4 GT3. The race will be a long one. Some of my team-mates have experience, others don't. For that reason, it is difficult to make any predictions. We practiced together in the VLN. That is immensely important, as you do not have a chance unless you are perfectly prepared for a 24-hour race."

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