



Customer Racing

Vita4One Racing claims pole position with the BMW Z4 GT3 in Spa – Marc VDS Racing locks out the front row.

Spa-Francorchamps, 27th July 2012. The BMW teams secured promising grid positions for the 24-hour race at Spa-Francorchamps (BE): Mathias Lauda (AT), Gregory Franchi (BE) and Frank Kechele (DE) will start the marathon in the Ardennes from pole position, sharing driving duties at the wheel of Vita4One Racing's BMW Z4 GT3 (car number 66). In Thursday's first qualifying session Kechele had set the best time of 2:19.473 minutes. With the scheduled super pole competition for the top-20 cars being cancelled on Friday, due to heavy rain, no team had the chance to take pole away from the squad of team boss Michael Bartels (DE).

Markus Palttala (FI), Bas Leinders (BE) and Maxime Martin (BE) of Marc VDS Racing will start from second on the grid, driving the no. 3 BMW Z4 GT3. They will line up alongside their fellow BMW team of Vita4One Racing on the front row. Local hero Martin was just 0.079 seconds slower than Kechele in the qualifying session.

In total, five of seven BMW Z4 GT3s managed to make it into the top20. DB Motorsport's Jeroen den Boer (NL), Stéphane Lémeret (BE) and Jeffrey van Hooydonck (NL) secured fifth. Tom Coronel (NL), Stefano Colombo (IT), Edoardo Liberati (IT) and Michela Cerruti (IT) of ROAL Motorsport came eighth. The second Marc VDS Racing car, driven by Bert Longin (BE), Henri Moser (CH) and Mike Hezemans (NL), claimed 16th on the grid. The Spa-Francorchamps 24 Hours will get underway at 16:00hrs on Saturday.

Michael Bartels (Vita4One Racing, Team Principal):

"When we travelled to Spa, we really didn't see ourselves as one of the favourites. So we are really pleased with this pole position. We saw quite early on that the BMW Z4 GT3 works well here. However, to secure pole position in such a competitive field, you must get everything together. Frank Kechele put in a fantastic lap, the car was excellent. The BMW technicians really gave us the best-possible package. Qualifying was all about one quick lap. In tomorrow's race there will be other factors that count. I hope we will be similarly well-prepared for that as we had been for qualifying."

Frank Kechele (Vita4One Racing, BMW Z4 GT3 #66, pole position):

"We are really happy with this pole position. Obviously I would have liked to go head-to-head with the opposition in the super pole session. But this would have been too risky in these conditions. Now we will focus on a solid race preparation. Our mechanics have a little less work due to today's cancellation and were able to save some energy for tomorrow's long race. My qualifying lap on Thursday was good. In one or two corners I might have even been a bit quicker."



Maxime Martin (Marc VDS Racing, BMW Z4 GT3 #3, 2nd on the grid):

"Second place is a good result. It's a pity we didn't get the chance to attack first place in the super pole competition, as we had proved quite a few times this year we are strong in the wet. There are still 24 long hours ahead of us, and anything can happen. For me this is a very special event. I'm really motivated to score a good result in front of my home crowd."

Jeroen den Boer (DB Motorsport, BMW Z4 GT3 #36, 5th on the grid):

"We are satisfied with P5. We only completed two timed laps on new tyres. I had been looking forward to a clear lap without traffic today, but then the big rain came suddenly. That's the way it is at this place. The weather in Spa is unpredictable."

The BMW teams at the Spa-Francorchamps 24 Hours:

#3 Marc VDS Racing Team, 2nd on the grid
Markus Palttala (FI), Bas Leinders (BE), Maxime Martin (BE)

#4 Marc VDS Racing Team, 16th on the grid
Bert Longin (BE), Henri Moser (CH), Mike Hezemans (NL)

#29 ROAL Motorsport, 8th on the grid
Tom Coronel (NL), Stefano Colombo (IT), Edoardo Liberati (IT), Michela Cerruti (IT)

#36 DB Motorsport, 5th on the grid
Jeroen den Boer (NL), Stéphane Lémeret (BE), Jeffrey van Hooydonck (NL)

#37 DB Motorsport, 34th on the grid
Simon Knap (NL), Andrew Danyliw (CA), Jochen Habets (NL), Léon Rijnbeek (NL)

#66 Vita4One Racing Team, 1st on the grid
Gregory Franchi (BE), Frank Kechele (DE), Mathias Lauda (AT)

#70 Race Art, 24th on the grid
Nick Catsburg (GB), Roger Grouwels (NL), Jaap van Lagen (NL), Robert Nearn (GB)

Press Contact: Jörg Kottmeier, Phone: +49 (0)170 5666 112, joerg.kottmeier@bmw.de
Ingo Lehbrink, Phone: +49 (0) 176 20340224, ingo.lehbrink@bmw.de

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