



DTM

### **Grohs, van de Poele, Ravaglia: BMW legends impressed by comeback season.**

Munich (DE), 15<sup>th</sup> October 2012. The six BMW drivers have made a lasting impression on the DTM thanks to a succession of strong performances over the course of the 2012 season. In doing so, they follow in the footsteps of the legendary drivers who caused a stir at the wheel of BMW racing cars in this series between 1984 and 1992. Among these were Harald Grohs (DE) and 1987 and 1989 champions Eric van de Poele (BE) and Roberto Ravaglia (IT). Between them, the trio notched up countless wins in the DTM. Another thing they have in common is that all three were only mildly surprised by the level of BMW's success at the past nine races.

Grohs, who won the inaugural DTM race in a BMW 635 CSi back in 1984 and was the first winner in a BMW M3 in 1987, was already confident BMW would be a force to be reckoned with ahead of the season-opener at the end of April. He saw the combination of BMW Team Schnitzer and Bruno Spengler (CA) as particularly promising – and was ultimately proven right. "When I discovered that Bruno would be driving for BMW Team Schnitzer, it was clear to me this would be a successful partnership. The team's experience coupled with the DTM know-how Bruno has built up over the years – it simply had to work," said Grohs. "The same goes for Martin Tomczyk, who also knows his way around the DTM as well as anyone. As it turned out, these two, together with the very impressive Augusto Farfus, were the most successful drivers. However, the other newcomers also did a very good job."

Ravaglia wrote the last big chapter in the success story of the BMW M3 in the DTM when he won the title back in 1989. Spengler could now replicate this feat in Hockenheim (DE), should he overtake Gary Paffett (GB, Mercedes) in the drivers' standings. "Of course Bruno can do it," said Ravaglia. "However, the final race of the season is something of a lottery. It all comes down to three factors: the driver, the car, and luck. If all three work out, then Bruno has an excellent chance."

Van de Poele knows from experience that anything can happen in the last race of the season. He was crowned champion in 1987 despite suffering a puncture, as his rivals were also struck by misfortune in a dramatic final race. "Ahead of the DTM finale in 1987 we had a very good plan. However, the puncture changed all that," said the 51-year-old. "I can only advise Bruno to take a relaxed approach to the race and trust his instincts. Anytime you go out of your way to avoid any surprises, they are guaranteed to occur."

**Motorsport**

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Whatever the outcome of Sunday's race, the three legends all agree BMW has already enjoyed a sensational comeback. "Even if Bruno finishes runner-up, that is still far more than anyone could have expected from BMW this year," said Grohs. "The comeback has been good for the DTM and thrilled the fans. The 2012 season has made very enjoyable watching."

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