



BMW Motorsport Season Review

DTM comeback, ALMS, junior programme and wins for privateers worldwide: BMW Motorsport looks back on a successful season.

Munich (DE), 1st December 2012. The dream comeback in the DTM, culminating in the drivers', manufacturers' and team titles, was the defining feature of BMW Motorsport's 2012 season. However, BMW teams and drivers also claimed victories, podiums and titles in many other series around the world and at iconic racing events. We take a look back at the highlights of the past season.

DTM: BMW Motorsport crowns sensational comeback with three titles.

When, after an absence of almost 20 years, BMW Motorsport lined up at the first race of the DTM season in Hockenheim (DE) on 29th April 2012, the goal was to be competitive as soon as possible. When Dirk Werner (DE) clocked the third fastest lap during the first qualifying session of the year, it soon became apparent this was a realistic goal. Andy Priaulx (GB) finished sixth in the race and scored the first points of the comeback season.

The first shockwaves were felt at the Lausitzring (DE), where Bruno Spengler (CA) secured pole position in the BMW Bank M3 DTM and went on to win Sunday's race. It was BMW's 50th win in the DTM and the first milestone in a sensational comeback season. Spengler won a further three races at the Nürburgring (DE), in Oschersleben (DE) and at the final race of the season in Hockenheim, where a dramatic finale resulted in him being crowned DTM champion for the first time in his career.

BMW Team Schnitzer won the team competition thanks to both Spengler and his team-mate Werner, who grew in stature and performed better and better over the course of the season. Augusto Farfus (BR) shone for BMW Team RBM with two pole positions and his maiden DTM victory in Valencia. Farfus finished seventh overall, making him the best-placed rookie. Defending champion Martin Tomczyk (DE) ended the season in eighth place in the drivers' standings – behind Farfus and in front of Werner. He claimed three podiums for BMW Team RMG, but did not have any luck with retirements in the second half of the season. Joey Hand (US) ensured that all six BMW drivers finished in the points on at least two occasions. As such, all the drivers played their part in securing first place in the manufacturers' standings for BMW Motorsport at the end of the ten races.

BMW Motorsport Director Jens Marquardt said: "We have made motorsport history with three titles in our comeback season. Together the three teams scored five wins, five pole positions and twelve podiums for BMW. All six of our drivers were in the points in 2012 and made their mark on the season on more than one occasion. To be totally honest, we would never have dared dream of a season like that."



North America: BMW Team RLL wins at Sebring and Road America.

While BMW Motorsport was winning a hat-trick of titles in the 2012 DTM, the goal in the American Le Mans Series (ALMS) was to defend the same number of titles – and BMW Team RLL made an excellent start to the new season. Joey Hand, Dirk Müller (DE) and Jonathan Summerton (US) won the GT class of the prestigious season-opener, the 12 Hours of Sebring (US), in the number 56 BMW M3 GT. Jörg Müller (DE), Bill Auberlen (US) and Uwe Alzen (DE) crossed the line fourth in the second BMW M3 GT. A second place in Long Beach (US) meant Hand and Dirk Müller still led the GT Drivers' Championship after two races. Over the remainder of the season, however, they were hampered in their efforts to defend the driver, team and manufacturer titles by more than their fair share of bad luck and the less than advantageous technical classification of the BMW M3 GT. Jörg Müller and Auberlen achieved another highlight with BMW Team RLL's second win at Road America (US). By the end of the season, the team had seven podiums to its name, including the two victories. That was enough for second place in the team competition and third in the Manufacturer Championship.

Marquardt summed up the season: "BMW Team RLL may not quite have managed to defend the three titles it won in the 2011 season, but two wins and a further five podiums mean it was still a successful season from BMW Motorsport's point of view. North America is a very important market for BMW. Team Principal Bobby Rahal and his crew do an outstanding job of representing the brand on the racetrack."

In the GRAND-AM Rolex Sports Car Series, BMW was once again on the top step of the podium as Engine Partner of Chip Ganassi Racing. Scott Pruett (US) and Memo Rojas (MX) won the Daytona Prototypes title for the third time in a row at the wheel of their BMW Riley. This was Chip Ganassi's sixth triumph in this series. Chip Ganassi Racing finished fourth and sixth at the prestigious 24-hour race in Daytona (US).

Nürburgring 24 Hours: Four BMW Z4 GT3s in the top ten.

BMW lined up at the 24-hour race at the Nürburgring (DE) with a host of privateer teams and drivers, and also sent four works-assisted cars into action in the "Green Hell". BMW Team Schubert and BMW Team Vita4One both ran two BMW Z4 GT3s. Uwe Alzen set a new lap record in qualifying to secure pole position for the Schubert team. The car with Alzen, Jörg Müller and Dirk Müller in the cockpit also set the fastest lap times during the race on the Nordschleife. Drive train damage ultimately cost them any chance of winning, and the trio came home seventh – ahead of the sister car with Dirk Adorf (DE), Claudia Hürtgen (DE), Dominik Schwager (DE) and Nico Bastian (DE), which had also encountered technical problems. BMW Team Vita4One's best-placed BMW Z4 GT3 followed in ninth, driven by BMW Motorsport test and development driver Marco Wittmann (DE), Jens Klingmann (DE), Pedro Lamy (PT) and Richard Göransson (SE). Team Principal Michael Bartels' (DE) second car retired following a crash. The best-placed BMW was the BMW Z4 GT3 belonging to Marc VDS Racing. Bas Leinders (BE), Markus Palttala (FI) and Maxime Martin (BE) narrowly missed out on a podium finish, coming home in fourth.



“The Nürburgring 24 Hours was once again full of everything the fans love about this endurance classic,” said Marquardt. “It was unbelievably close throughout the entire race – and we were in the thick of the action with our BMW Z4 GT3s. We would obviously have liked to have won on the 40th anniversary of BMW M. Unfortunately, we were denied by technical problems on the two BMW Team Schubert cars. Despite this, all the BMW teams deserve a huge compliment. They never gave up and fought magnificently.”

BMW Motorsport around the world: Victories and titles all over the globe.

Countless privateer teams and drivers around the world once again put their faith in BMW cars and did an excellent job of representing the brand in 2012. Taking centre stage are the title winners: Thomas Biagi (IT) and Stefano Colombo (IT) won the Italian GT Championship at the wheel of a BMW Z4 GT3 run by BMW Team Italia. Norbert Michelisz (HU) of Team Zengő Motorsport won the Independents' Trophy in the FIA World Touring Car Championship in his BMW 320 TC. Also among the most successful drivers were Carsten Knechtges (DE), Tim Scheerbarth (DE) and Steve Jans (LU) in their BMW M3 in the production car class of the VLN Endurance Championship. The same applies for Nick Catsburg (NL) with the BMW M3 GT4 in the Dutch GT Championship. “Customer racing once again produced a multitude of great performances from BMW drivers in high-class racing series in 2012,” said Marquardt. “Every driver in a BMW car is part of the BMW Motorsport family.”

It goes without saying that the same applies to all those who narrowly missed out on titles, despite fantastic performances. Bas Leinders, Maxime Martin and Markus Palttala of Marc VDS Racing finished runners-up in the Blancpain Endurance Series in their BMW Z4 GT3 following a dramatic finale. Michael Bartels and Yelmer Buurman (NL) of Vita4One Racing won four races in the FIA GT1 World Championship at the wheel of a BMW Z4 GT3, and were involved in the title race right down to the season finale. BMW also claimed victories in the German ADAC GT Masters, the British GT Championship and the GT300 class of the Japanese Super GT Championship.

Formula BMW Talent Cup: Dienst takes overall victory.

The winner of the 2012 Talent Cup is Marvin Dienst (DE). The 15-year-old secured first place in a thrilling finale in Oschersleben. As a reward for his efforts, BMW Motorsport will support him in a higher-level single-seater class for the coming season. Dienst was level with Tristan Viidas (EE) after the three races that made up the final, but the title went to the driver from Worms (DE) as a result of the better individual race results.

“Congratulations to Marvin Dienst on winning the 2012 Formula BMW Talent Cup,” said Marquardt. “Although only one person can ultimately stand on top of the podium, all the competitors in the Formula BMW Talent Cup are winners in our eyes. They have all made huge progress in their development over the course of the season’s training. That goes for the learning curves both on and off the track. In the Formula BMW Talent Cup we train the talented youngsters in all the areas they require for a subsequent career in professional motor racing.”

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