



American Le Mans Series

### **BMW Z4 GTE race debut in Sebring – BMW Team RLL ready for fifth ALMS season.**

Munich (DE), 12<sup>th</sup> March 2013. The 2013 season of the American Le Mans Series (ALMS) is not the only thing kicking off at the 12 Hours of Sebring (US) this weekend. The race also marks the start of a new era in BMW Motorsport's programme in North America: This is the first time BMW Team RLL will line up against opposition in the GT class with the newly developed BMW Z4 GTE.

The BMW Z4 GTE debuts in the wake of an extremely successful Sebring scorecard for its predecessor, the BMW M3 GT. BMW Team RLL won the GT class at the endurance classic in Florida in both 2011 and 2012. This year, the 61<sup>st</sup> staging of the race at the "Sebring International Raceway" will serve as a marker to determine the strength of the new car. At the wheel of a sinister No. 55 BMW Z4 GTE finished in BMW's Frozen Black will be Bill Auberlen (US), Maxime Martin (BE) and Jörg Müller (DE). The No. 56 car – in classic, Alpine White BMW Motorsport livery – will be driven by Dirk Müller (DE), Joey Hand (US) and John Edwards (US).

#### **Jens Marquardt (BMW Motorsport Director):**

"After all the months of development and preparation with the new BMW Z4 GTE, we are obviously now looking forward to testing ourselves against the opposition for the first time in Sebring. We have been very successful at this 12-hour race in recent years. I am excited to see whether the BMW Z4 GTE will cope as well with the specific demands of this race as its predecessor the BMW M3 GT did. We would like to start the season with a good result. However, the priority is to capitalise on the potential of the new car. This will obviously take a while."

#### **Bobby Rahal (Team Principal of BMW Team RLL):**

"We had a reasonably good test at Sebring. The new BMW Z4 GTE ran relatively reliably, which is the first battle at a place like Sebring. I don't know how we stack up against the competition, because we didn't run with many of them and track conditions changed. The drivers seemed to be happy with the handling of the car. I guess I'm never confident going into any race – and particularly not going into Sebring. However, we can be quite happy with the way our preparation program went. Let's wait and see what the season opener has in store for us."

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### **Bill Auberlen (BMW Z4 GTE – car number 55):**

“This year will be my 20<sup>th</sup> time at the 12 Hours of Sebring and, after driving the new BMW Z4 GTE at our tests, I’m looking forward to my anniversary even more. I think we’re looking quite good, considering the early phase in our development program. It’s a lot of fun to drive the car and my new teammate, Maxime Martin, is fantastic. There are not many things someone can do for 20 years without it ever getting a little boring. Racing is one of those things. I am more passionate about it every year.”

### **Maxime Martin (BMW Z4 GTE – car number 55):**

“I’ve heard many great things about Sebring. The track is completely ‘American Style’. By that I mean it is very bumpy with walls everywhere. It is quite different to the European circuits I’m used to. The BMW Z4 GTE made a good impression on me in our two-day test at Sebring. I’m really looking forward to the race.”

### **Jörg Müller (BMW Z4 GTE – car number 55):**

“I really enjoyed my return to Sebring in 2012. The atmosphere in Florida is simply sensational. You can sense just how pleased the ALMS fans are that the winter break is finally over. The new season is welcomed with a big party. BMW Team RLL has prepared intensely for this weekend. We will do our best.”

### **Dirk Müller (BMW Z4 GTE – car number 56):**

“I’m always excited to start the season, especially at Sebring. This year almost everything is new, from the car and tyres to my two new team-mates. We are obviously well aware it will be very difficult to win the GT class three years in a row, especially with a new car. However, I know everyone in the team is extremely motivated to do well.”

### **Joey Hand (BMW Z4 GTE – car number 56):**

“Sebring has become a very special place for me with two consecutive wins. In fact, I still hear from people about how exciting last year’s finish was. GT racing in the ALMS – especially at Sebring – is outstanding. It is a race and a place that makes me drive every lap as hard as I can.”

### **John Edwards (BMW Z4 GTE – car number 56):**

“I’ve raced in support races to the 12 Hours in previous seasons, but have not been here for four years. Because of this, it was very nice to be able to test here and familiarise myself with the Sebring circuit. I’ve kept my eye on ALMS competition in past years and I’m delighted to make my debut at Sebring with BMW and BMW Team RLL.”

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## Corporate Communications



**Note to editors:** To put you in the mood for the start of the ALMS season, you can find a video of the BMW Z4 GTE tests at Sebring here:  
<http://youtu.be/oiDmlqd1iEU>

**Motorsport**

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