



American Le Mans Series

BMW Team RLL finishes one-two at Long Beach – BMW Z4 GTE wins in only second race of debut season.

Munich (DE), 21st April 2013. The streets of Long Beach, California (US) continue to be the favourite stomping ground of BMW Team RLL as its cars finished one-two in Saturday's American Le Mans Series (ALMS) race. Bill Auberlen (US) and Maxime Martin (BE), driving the Frozen Black No. 55 BMW Z4 GTE, won the GT category, finishing 6.578 seconds ahead of the No. 56 car of Joey Hand (US) and Dirk Müller (DE).

In only the second race for the new BMW Z4 GTE, the team beat a very competitive GT class field with excellent strategy set in place during the first hour of the two-hour contest around the 1.968-mile, 11-turn temporary street circuit. BMW Team RLL has finished with at least one car on the Long Beach podium, including a win from pole in 2011, for five consecutive years. This victory puts BMW in a tie with Chevrolet at the top of the GT Class Manufacturer points. The win was also the first for the new partnership between BMW and Michelin.

Martin started in the No. 55 car from fourth. A spin on lap two dropped him to the rear of the field, but the first of three long caution periods in the first hour of the race gave the 55 crew the chance to reverse its fortunes. Pitting Martin after 25 minutes, on lap 16, Auberlen got behind the wheel with a full tank of fuel and new Michelins. During the second caution period Auberlen pitted twice more for fuel only.

When the race went green with 44 minutes to run, the die was cast for the veteran to not return to the pits for the remainder of the race. A third caution, during which the rest of field pitted, allowed for a bit more breathing room for fuel conservation and Auberlen to move up to second as the race went green just past the first hour. On lap 66 with 15 minutes left in the race, Auberlen took the lead and drove to his first win at the Long Beach.

The No. 56 BMW Z4 GTE had an equally exciting race. Hand started the car from seventh on the grid. He pitted during the third caution period and handed the car to Müller, who began his stint from third spot as the race went green. Charging for the entire second hour he took over second place with two laps remaining to give BMW Team RLL its first one-two finish since the 12 Hours of Sebring (US) in 2011.

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Motorsport



Jens Marquardt (BMW Motorsport Director):

“Congratulations to BMW Team RLL for this sensational result. We have always been convinced the BMW Z4 GTE would be successful in the ALMS. However, not even the biggest optimists would have predicted a one-two in only the car's second race appearance. The outcome of the Long Beach race just shows how well our development team in Munich and BMW Team RLL have worked. Our race strategy in Long Beach was just perfect, and the four drivers turned it into a great result.”

Bobby Rahal (Team Principal BMW Team RLL):

“This is a really good one. The 55 car called excellent strategy. We followed a different tact and at the end we put both cars at the front of the field and the BMW Z4 GTE into the history books with a one-two finish in only our second race. We were able to run more than one stint on the Michelins, and that was crucial to make our strategies work. There is nothing like winning at Long Beach. Sebring is the big one, but Long Beach is not far behind in my book.”

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

“Today the BMW Z4 GTE took me to the top of the Long Beach podium and that is something I have tried to do for a very long time. Great strategy by the team and the Michelins were an absolute pleasure to drive on all day.”

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

“I made a little mistake in the beginning, but who was to know that it would set the stage for a great strategy call by Jay (O’Connell) and Bruno (Couprrie). Today is a fantastic day for Bill and BMW.”

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

“Congratulations to Bill for his first win at Long Beach. At the end Bobby was on the radio telling me to push, but to make sure I brought it home. It was not easy to get by Dominik (Farnbacher), but being old team-mates I knew he would be fair. I am delighted for the entire BMW Team RLL family.”

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

“After qualifying seventh I was not pleased, but I told the crew I thought we could win. It wasn’t our win today, but I could not be happier for Bill to get his first win at his home track. Dirk did a great job to bring the car home second.”

Round three of the 2013 American Le Mans Series will be held at “Laguna Seca Raceway” in Monterey (US) on 11th May with the running of the six-hour American Le Mans Monterey race.

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