



24h Nürburgring

After six hours: BMW Sports Trophy Team Marc VDS impresses in the rain – Race interrupted at the Nürburgring.

Nürburgring (DE), 19th May 2013. The first few hours of the 24-hour race at the Nürburgring (DE) have been a turbulent affair. BMW Sports Trophy Team Marc VDS has made a good start to the endurance classic. As night fell over the Nordschleife, the team had established itself in the leading group with both BMW Z4 GT3s.

The number 26 car, with drivers Bas Leinders (BE), Markus Palttala (FI), Henri Moser (CH) and Richard Göransson (SE) currently lies fourth. The team's second car – number 25, with Maxime Martin (BE), Yelmer Buurman (NL), Andrea Piccini (IT) and Göransson at the wheel – is eighth. Extreme weather conditions, with rain and fog in many sections of the circuit, led race control to temporarily suspend the 41st edition of the Eifel marathon at about 23:00hrs.

Martin and Leinders started behind the wheel of the two BMW Sports Trophy Team Marc VDS cars and stayed in touch with the leaders. When the rain came down, the BMW Sports Trophy Team Marc VDS drivers showed their strength in wet conditions, clocking fast lap times and moving through the field, until the red flag was waved.

BMW Team Schubert had a moment of shock within the first hour of the race. A yellow phase was introduced at the Schwedenkreuz section of the circuit on lap six, during which the cars had to brake down to just 60 km/h. This resulted in a tailback, which ended directly behind a blind passage. Uwe Alzen (DE), in the number 19 BMW Z4 GT3, approached the end of the queue and saw the second BMW Team Schubert car (number 20) – the last in the chain of slow cars – too late to avoid a collision. Alzen reacted quickly enough to avoid a full-on collision, but still hit the rear-left wheel of the black BMW Z4 GT3 with the front-right wheel of his car, before then crashing into the barriers.

As a result, Claudia Hürtgen (DE) lost a lap in the number 20 car. Alzen's car spent 45 minutes in the garage with a damaged steering gear, bringing an end to its challenge at this year's Nürburgring 24 Hours. Despite this, the team still attempted to repair the damage and continue, but BMW Team Schubert's white BMW Z4 GT3 ultimately had to retire after about four hours. That brought the race to a premature end for Dirk Müller (DE), Augusto Farfus (BR), who had travelled to the Nürburgring straight from the afternoon's DTM race at Brands Hatch (GB), and Alzen. The number 20 car, on the other hand, remains in the race. Hürtgen, Dirk Adorf (DE), Jens Klingmann (DE) and Martin Tomczyk (DE), who was also in action in the DTM, are currently 16th.

The fifth BMW Z4 GT3 in the field – with drivers Henry Walkenhorst (DE), Ralf Overhaus (DE), Maximilian Partl (DE) and Wolf Silvester (DE) – lies 19th.



Richard Göransson (BMW Z4 GT3, car number 26, BMW Sports Trophy Team Marc VDS):

“The car was very good in these conditions, but the rain was getting stronger with every lap, and it was really just a matter of keeping our BMW Z4 GT3 on the track. The lap times were good, but they were not the priority in the minutes before the race was suspended.”

Stefan Wendl (Team Manager BMW Team Schubert):

“The number 19 car was seriously damaged in an incident during the race. After lengthy repairs and multiple function checks, we decided to withdraw the car from the race for safety reasons. Despite the disappointment, we are now even more determined to push on throughout the rest of the race and get the best result possible for BMW, our partners and the fans.”

Uwe Alzen (BMW Team Schubert, car number 19):

“There was a long tailback in the Schwedenkreuz section, as a result of a yellow phase. At the end of the tailback was my team-mate Claudia Hürtgen’s BMW Z4 GT3. I just managed to avoid a full-on frontal collision. In taking evasive action, however, I hit Claudia’s rear-left tyre with the front-right tyre on my car. I then made light contact with the crash barriers. During the subsequent stop for repairs, it emerged that the steering gear had to be replaced. That was obviously the end of our chances of achieving a top finish. It is just very disappointing, and I feel really sorry for the entire team. On the other hand, I am glad that I was able to avoid an even bigger collision and that nothing worse happened.”

Press contact: Jörg Kottmeier, Tel.: +49 (0) 170 566 6112, joerg.kottmeier@bmw.de
Ingo Lehbrink, Tel.: +49 (0) 176 203 40224, ingo.lehbrink@bmw.de

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