



American Le Mans Series

Second ALMS GT victory for the new BMW Z4 GTE: Dirk Müller and John Edwards win at Lime Rock Park.

Munich (DE), 7th July 2013. Dirk Müller (DE) and John Edwards (US), driving the no. 56 BMW Z4 GTE, claimed GT victory in the fourth round of the 2013 American Le Mans Series (ALMS) season at Lime Rock Park (US) from pole position. The win increases Müller's lead in the GT driver points standings. Bill Auberlen (US) and Maxime Martin (BE), in the no. 55 car, finished fourth. The victory also resulted in the no. 56 machine being awarded the Michelin Green X Challenge Award adding an exclamation point on the story of the day.

On paper, the second victory in the debut season of the BMW Z4 GTE may look to have been an easy one as the no. 56 car was almost always at the front of the GT field, but the 2.45-hour race at the Lime Rock Park circuit was never truly decided until the chequered flag waved. The late afternoon race start meant extreme summer heat for both the team and drivers. Seemingly as hot as the day, Edwards started the race from his first ALMS pole and ran a trouble free first stint, pitting on lap 76 for Müller to take over. The final 1.45 hours of the race was not an easy one for the GT points leader, as the race was slowed by multiple caution periods erasing every lead Müller amassed. A late caution closed up the field with some 14 minutes remaining, but when the green flag waved with four minutes to go Müller would not be denied, winning by 0.905 seconds.

Martin started the no. 55 BMW Z4 GTE from second on the grid. Early on he was hit, but was able to stay on the lead lap in tenth place. He drove a fine stint to move up to fifth before pitting under green on lap 77 to hand over to Auberlen. A change in strategy was made during the race's first caution period and Auberlen was pitted a few laps later to top up the fuel and change left side Michelin tires with the aim to run the remainder of the race. As others pitted, Auberlen moved to the front of the field and increased his lead to almost a full lap. Unfortunately, the plan went out of the window when Auberlen was called into the pits for a questionable call by the officials for avoidable contact. He dropped back to ninth, ultimately finishing fourth to add a second top-five finish of the season.

Bobby Rahal (Team Principal BMW Team RLL):

“This was a hard race but a great race. The Corvette guys gave us a good run, but we were able to stay ahead by cleanly working through the traffic. We had a pit stop that we weren't planning on but fortunately it didn't penalise us because we had a lap on most of the field. I'm really pleased for BMW, pleased for the team, very pleased for John and Dirk ...especially Dirk for moving further ahead in the

Motorsport

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driver championship. We needed a win here because the next tracks may not be so friendly to our car."

Gordon McDonnell (BMWNA Motorsport Manager):

"We are very pleased with our second win for the BMW Z4 GTE this season and a victory at our home track. Congratulations to John Edwards for his first ALMS pole and his great stint in the no. 56 car today. Dirk did a great job of keeping the lead and bringing home the victory. It was a tough day for the no. 55 BMW Z4 GTE, but Maxime and Bill never stopped fighting back towards the front. What a great way to start the post Le Mans part of the season."

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

"It is one of those days! Unbelievable. John had a phenomenal first stint that put pressure on me to bring home the victory. I have to give a very big thank you to the BMW Team RLL guys. We kept improving the car through each session and by the race it was perfect. Michelin gave us great tyres, BMW gave us a great car and it all came together."

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

"We were first in every session except warm-up. First ALMS win from my first ALMS pole. It was a hard race though. It was so humid. This track never gives you a rest. I was really feeling it after the stint. On a hot day like this, victory is that much sweeter. A huge thanks to the team this weekend."

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

"Very early into the race we were hit by the Ferrari which took us from the lead to the back. We managed to work our way back up to the front. Then I had the incident with the GTC car that caused the penalty. I was three quarters of the way up beside him, I thought he saw me, but obviously he didn't and we got a penalty that took us back to ninth. In the end, we fought back up to fourth, moved up in the championship and gained valuable points. I feel sorry for the team. They all worked very hard in very hot and humid conditions and we couldn't give them a podium...but we'll get it next time."

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

"We scored some good points with our fourth place finish. It's a long championship and I think we have the car to be in front and challenge for a win. This was my first time at Lime Rock. It's a tricky, short and fun track."

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