



24h Spa-Francorchamps

Marc VDS Racing to start the Spa 24 Hours from fourth on the grid – Four BMW Z4 GT3s battling for superpole.

Spa-Francorchamps (BE), 26th July 2013. The calm before the storm: Both in qualifying and the closely fought “superpole” competition, the BMW Sports Trophy teams claimed promising grid positions for the 24-hour race in Spa-Francorchamps (BE). On Friday Marc VDS Racing’s Nicky Catsburg (NL) was the fastest BMW driver in the deciding top-20 single-lap qualifying, driving the number 4 BMW Z4 GT3. With sun and scattered clouds, he clocked a time of 2:21.100 minutes at the classic “Circuit de Spa-Francorchamps”. With that Catsburg and his team-mates, Markus Palttala (FI) and Henri Moser (CH), are starting fourth in the 65th running of the endurance classic on Saturday. Aston Martin’s Stefan Mücke (DE) claimed pole position, putting in a time of 2:20.675 minutes on the quicker of his two flying laps.

Apart from the trio in the number 4 car, the other BMW drivers also passed the first test of the weekend. The Marc VDS drivers, Maxime Martin (BE), Bas Leinders (BE) and Yelmer Buurman (NL), were eighth in the number 3 BMW Z4 GT3. Henry Hassid (FR), Ludovic Badey (FR), Pierre Thiriet (FR) and Mathias Beche (CZ) from TDS Racing will start the race at the 7.004-kilometre track from 13th – and took sixth in the Pro-Am category. Also Frank Kechele (DE), Greg Franchi (BE) and Stefano Colombo (IT) managed to claim a top-20 grid position for the Vita4One Racing Team, starting from 18th.

Further back in the field are the three BMW drivers Dirk Müller (DE), last year’s winner, Andrea Piccini (IT), and Jens Klingmann (DE). They didn’t manage to qualify any higher than 24th in the number 14 BMW Z4 GT3. However, a glance at the history of the Spa 24 Hours shows, even from grid positions in the middle of the pack, it is possible to score a top result. The marathon in the Ardennes, which also counts towards the Blancpain Endurance Series this year, will go green this Saturday at 16.30. Twenty-four hours after that the winners will be known.

Nicky Catsburg (Marc VDS Racing, number 4 BMW Z4 GT):

“Fourth on the grid is naturally an amazing result at a big race such as the 24 Hours of Spa-Francorchamps. It should be possible for us to stay away from trouble at the start. To be the best BMW driver is a great feeling. But that’s not particularly important. As a team we are on the right track, and we have worked very hard to be in top form here. I made some minor mistakes on my fastest lap, so achieving an even faster lap time would have been possible. However, at the moment the most important thing is that the BMW Z4 GT3’s performance is strong, and we can start from a very promising grid position. We are looking forward to the start of the race on Saturday.”

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