



American Le Mans Series

**BMW Team RLL comes third and fourth at COTA – Dirk Müller moves into second in the ALMS GT driver standings.**

Munich (DE), 22<sup>nd</sup> September 2013. BMW Team RLL finished third and fourth in the inaugural American Le Mans Series (ALMS) race at the Circuit of the Americas in Austin (US). Both BMW Z4 GTEs ran strongly for the majority of the race, only to fall victim to the top speed advantage of the Corvettes and Vipers in the closing stages. John Edwards (US) and Dirk Müller (DE) claimed third in the number 56 BMW Z4 GTE for Müller's second consecutive podium appearance. The result, combined with the withdrawal of the number 4 Corvette during the race, moves Müller to second in the GT driver standings, 13 points behind the leaders.

Despite qualifying fourth, Edwards had to start the number 56 car from the back of the entire field of 33 cars due to a miscue of the team with the qualifying tyres. He charged back to fifth in class before pitting on lap 24, some 50 minutes into the race. Müller re-joined the race in ninth and drove an equally strong first stint to be in third before making his final pit stop on lap 48. Müller then moved into second and hounded the leading Corvette for the remainder of the race. On the last lap, he was unable to defend from the Viper on the long, uphill front straight and was forced to settle for the last step of the podium.

The number 55 car of Bill Auberlen (US) and Joey Hand (US) finished fourth. Auberlen started the race from pole position earned by Hand in Friday's qualifying session. When the green flag waved, the car experienced a mechanical issue that, despite clearing up within minutes, cost Auberlen six positions. He kept his head down and moved back near the front before pitting on lap 19. Hand re-joined the field in ninth and at the one-hour mark was fifth. One half-hour later he was in second, only five seconds from the lead. He made his final stop on lap 49, at the 1.45 hour mark. He ran strongly behind Müller for the remainder of the race before being relegated to fourth only four laps from the chequered flag. Round nine of the 2013 ALMS season will be held at Virginia International Raceway in Danville (US) on 5<sup>th</sup> October.

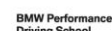
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**Motorsport**



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

"I'm disappointed for the team. There's such a deficit in straight-line speed, it just hurts our ability to race those other guys. But the BMW Z4 GTE ran beautifully and handled well. The pit strategy was solid; we passed the Ferrari and both Vipers in the pits, so we made up a lot of places. We did our best; third and fourth are not so bad, and we'll try again at VIR. The Circuit of the Americas is fabulous... world class. I haven't been to anything else built like this in this country, perhaps ever."

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

"What a race. It was like a roller coaster. Just shortly before the race I got the message that we were starting from the back of the grid, and at that point I was really down and wanted to go home. But when I saw John challenging through traffic to the front, and absolutely on top of it, he really showed me that his mind was switched on, and I was fully motivated by that. When I got in the car after he had done 55 minutes, I knew it had to be maximum attack. I did what felt like one hour, fifty-five minutes of qualifying. I had that yellow machine in front of me, but first I had Joey in front of me. It was a lot of fun to race him and I really enjoyed it. Then I was just trying to chase the Corvette down and I wanted to catch him, like a terrier - and I did it, tenth by tenth. I got caught in traffic a bit and used all my experience, but in the end the Viper passed me on the straight like it was a GT1-class car. I wanted to win, but I'm happy with P3 because I gave it my all."

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

"It was a pretty intense day at the office today. We had a little mix up with the tyres and so we had to start last in the GT field. I could tell our car was really quick and I started moving up through the field. The team called a great race and put us in a position to challenge for the win at the end, but at the end of the day there's no replacement for pure horsepower and we saw what happened. The BMW Z4 GTE is unbelievable in the corners and through the Esses. It's a dream to drive and I could see myself gaining on any car around that wasn't a prototype, but those corners are the toughest places to pass people."

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

"It's kind of unusual, but I had a crazy start in the first few laps and I dropped back quite a bit. But then it straightened out and we were quick enough to stay with the others. Then Joey did the two next stints and earned P2, but eventually we just got run down by these competitors that are so fast."

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**Joey Hand (BMW Z4 GTE – car number 55):**

“I’ve had a good time all week. I’m glad I had the chance to be here with BMW Team RLL. I got comfortable really early at this new race track, including the laps in the rain. Bill had a tough go of it in the race with some tyre pressure issues at the start. I got in the car and got a good roll going in the first stint, and the strategy was good too. On the second stint, the heavy fuel load started putting a lot of heat into the brakes and we basically ran out of front brake pads at the end. All I could do was try to save it to come home. It’s a shame because the race was really good at the end and my car was improving overall. I had tried to save my car for the end but that’s the way it goes. I appreciate the effort everybody gave here and that’s all we had.”

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