



American Le Mans Series

BMW Team RLL takes ALMS GT title fight to the wire – P4 and P5 at the Virginia International Raceway.

Munich (DE), 6th October 2013. BMW Team RLL finished fourth and fifth in the penultimate round of the American Le Mans Series (ALMS) at Virginia International Raceway US). A spirited drive and great battle by Dirk Müller (DE) in the number 56 BMW Z4 GTE during the final minutes of the race secured the fourth-place finish to keep the BMW Motorsport driver second in GT driver championship points standings, and he is now 16 points behind the leaders. The number 55 BMW Z4 GTE of Bill Auberlen (US) and Maxime Martin (BE) finished fifth.

Competing in his last ALMS race of the season before returning to Germany to finish his second year of the DTM series, Joey Hand (US) started the number 56 BMW Z4 GTE from the third position Müller earned in Friday's qualifying session. Hand pitted on lap 36 to turn the car over to Müller. Racing in fifth for the next 27 laps, Müller made a strong pass for fourth on lap 63. He lost the position 13 laps later, but regained it to post a hard-earned fourth-place finish.

The team decided pole winner Martin would finish the race, so Auberlen started the number 55 machine from the front of the 11-car GT field. He pitted during the race's first caution period and ran as high as fourth in the opening minutes of the race. The fortunes of the number 55 car turned worse as Auberlen's left-side door hinge failed and forced a second stop just past the one-hour mark. Martin swapped into the seat and rejoined the race tenth, practically two laps behind the leaders. While the race's pace was slowed by two more caution periods, Martin kept his head down and in the final 45 minutes of the race regained the lost laps and charged up five positions to finish fifth.

The season-ending Petit Le Mans will be held at Road Atlanta (US) on Saturday, 19th October.

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

“First of all, we're still in the championship hunt, so a big thanks to my buddy Joey Hand. We knew it would be tough from the very beginning, but then with all that yellow [flags], it came down to a sprint race at the end. So that's how I drove; it was hard, tough racing and I made my move on the next-to-last lap in the hairpin. That was the only chance I had, so I took it. Actually it feels like a victory because it kept the number 3 car from running away in the championship. I'm very happy with this result.”

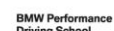
Media Contact.

Jörg Kottmeier
+49 170 566 6112
joerg.kottmeier@bmw.de

Ingo Lehbrink
+49 176 203 40224
ingo.lehbrink@bmw.de

Thomas Plucinsky,
+1 201 406 4801,
thomas.plucinsky@bmwna.com

Media Website
press.bmwgroup-sport.com



Motorsport



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

“For me, the role was that of a part-time guy all weekend, which feels a little unusual, but I wanted to drive clean with Dirk’s championship in mind. Starting the race, that was difficult because I couldn’t quite be myself with a lot of guys chasing me. I would have liked to fight harder, but I was proud to keep the car in the hunt and turn it over to Dirk so he could race to the end.”

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

“The starts are always tough, but BMW takes care of us in the handling department, and we’re just too slow in the straights. So I got ambushed, and after the door hinge broke the team battled beautifully back up to fifth from two laps down, and I think that’s a darn good day from where we might have been.”

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

“The best thing to say is that we knew we had to take every chance to get back on the lead lap. Thanks to the two safety car periods we were able to make it happen. Then we passed a number of cars and our car was getting faster so we put up a great fight. At the end it was a great fight in traffic and I was able to take advantage of several moments in the traffic. We pushed until the end and ended up fifth. I think we had the car that could finish even better.”

Media Contact.

Jörg Kottmeier
+49 170 566 6112
joerg.kottmeier@bmw.de

Ingo Lehbrink
+49 176 203 40224
ingo.lehbrink@bmw.de

Thomas Plucinsky,
+1 201 406 4801,
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