



24h Spa-Francorchamps

**Endurance highlight in the Ardennes: seven BMW works drivers and six BMW Z4 GT3s line up at the 24 Hours of Spa.**

Spa-Francorchamps (BE), 23<sup>rd</sup> July 2014. This weekend, the iconic Spa-Francorchamps circuit in Belgium is the venue for the next highlight of the 2014 endurance season. The 24 Hours of Spa-Francorchamps, which also forms the highlight of the season in the Blancpain Endurance Series, sees four BMW teams in action, fielding a total of six BMW Z4 GT3s in the Ardennes marathon. A host of BMW works drivers will bolster the driving line-up within the individual teams.

BMW Sports Trophy Team Marc VDS from Belgium will run two BMW Z4 GT3s in the Pro Cup category at its home race. At the wheel of the number 66 car will be the two BMW DTM drivers Maxime Martin (BE), who recently claimed his maiden victory in the DTM, and Augusto Farfus (BR). They are joined by BMW works driver Jörg Müller (DE). The second car, number 77, will be driven by BMW works drivers Lucas Luhr (DE) and Dirk Werner (DE), alongside Markus Palttala (FI).

The TDS Racing team competes at the "Circuit de Spa-Francorchamps" with two BMW Z4 GT3s in the Pro-Am Cup category. BMW works driver Jens Klingmann (DE) joins Henry Hassid (FR), Nick Catsburg (NL) and Pierre Thiriet (FR) in the cockpit of the number 12 car. The French quartet of Eric Clément, Benjamin Lariche, Nicolas Armindo and Olivier Pla will share driving duties in the number 10 TDS Racing car.

Another BMW works driver, Alexander Sims (GB), is taking on the challenge of Spa-Francorchamps: he will drive a BMW Z4 GT3 for Ecurie Ecosse alongside Olivier Bryant, Andrew Smith and Alasdair McCaig (all GB). The sixth BMW Z4 GT3 in the field belongs to ROAL Motorsport, and its team principal Roberto Ravaglia (IT). Stefano Comandini, Eugenio Amos, Stefano Colombo and Michela Cerruti (all IT) will alternate behind the wheel of the number 43 car. Ecurie Ecosse and ROAL Motorsport start in the Pro-Am Cup category.

The 24-hour race at Spa-Francorchamps gets underway at 16:30 on Saturday 26<sup>th</sup> July. The race finishes at 16:30 on Sunday 27<sup>th</sup> July.

**Quotes ahead of the 24-hour race at Spa-Francorchamps.**

**Maxime Martin (BMW Sports Trophy Team Marc VDS, Number 66):**

"It is great to be back at Spa-Francorchamps. It is my home race and the most important race in Belgium. I know BMW Sports Trophy Team Marc VDS pretty well and I think we have a really good line-up this year, composed of very experienced and fast drivers. That is important for a 24-hour race: you need experience and speed. So I think with this line-up we are well prepared. My DTM win in Moscow has obviously given me a confidence boost ahead of my home race."



**Augusto Farfus (BMW Sports Trophy Team Marc VDS, Number 66):**

"I am extremely motivated because Spa-Francorchamps is a brilliant track. I have really fast team-mates and we have a strong team behind us. Our car is extremely good in the infield. Therefore, I think we definitively have a chance to fight for the overall victory. In addition, Spa is the only one of the five most important 24-hour races which I have not yet contested. I have already raced in Dubai, Daytona, Le Mans and at the Nürburgring with BMW, and now I will compete at Spa. This makes me extremely proud."

**Lucas Luhr (BMW Sports Trophy Team Marc VDS, Number 77):**

"I am really looking forward to Spa. The circuit in the Ardennes is in a beautiful location, and I always describe it as a 'mini Nordschleife' with all its uphill and downhill sections. What makes the 24 Hours of Spa so challenging is the incredible number of cars on the track – and they are all GT3 cars. We have seen in recent years that the race has been more and more fiercely contested. It is important to get through the traffic as well as possible. However, that is not so easy, as all the cars are roughly as quick as each other – in theory, at least."

**Dirk Werner (BMW Sports Trophy Team Marc VDS, Number 77):**

"The 24 Hours of Spa-Francorchamps is special because only GT3 cars compete there. You don't get that anywhere else. This means that all the cars on the track are also direct rivals, which is a special challenge. The circuit is great. Together with the Nürburgring it is one of my favourite racetracks. Because of this, I am very much looking forward to the weekend. The race will be very tiring. There are a lot of quick corners, but not many opportunities to catch a breather. You always have to wait and see how races like this develop. However, I feel we have the total package to be right up there at the very front of the field."

**Jens Klingmann (TDS Racing, Number 12):**

"I drove at Spa-Francorchamps last year, and am delighted to be back again this year. The TDS Racing team may be new to me, but we spent a successful test day together. I was well received by everyone in the team. We compete in the Pro-Am class, which means that Nick Catsburg and I will share the cockpit with two gentlemen drivers. That will be interesting. We are well prepared and have our sights set on victory in the Pro-Am class."

**Alexander Sims (Ecurie Ecosse, Number 79):**

"I know the Ecurie Ecosse team well as we race together in the British GT championship. I think that we can be pretty competitive. Whether or not we can fight for the win in the Pro-Am class remains to be seen, but we will obviously do our best. The challenge at Spa itself is always very difficult. Usually, a lot of cars retire over the course of the 24 hours, so the first priority is to finish the race. It would be good if we can qualify in a good position and just stay out of trouble at the start. I know that our BMW Z4 GT3 is very reliable so my confidence is high and I am really looking forward to the challenge."

**Michela Cerruti (ROAL Motorsport, Number 43):**

"I am really looking forward to Spa-Francorchamps. Every year, this is the race I wait for more than anything else. I love 24-hour racing and I love the race in Spa. The first and biggest challenge will be to stay out of trouble and to finish the race. If we



achieve that we will have a good chance of a strong result. This season in the Blancpain Endurance Series, the ROAL Motorsport team has already enjoyed a great win at Monza and then another podium in Silverstone. We have always been strong on race day. Spa is also important for the team for the championship, as we can score a lot of points with a good result.”

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