



BMW Motorsport

## **Alessandro Zanardi returns to racing action in his golden BMW Z4 GT3 at Portimão.**

Portimão (PT), 6<sup>th</sup> September 2014. This weekend, Alessandro Zanardi (IT) is in action on the picturesque Algarve coast in Southern Portugal. The BMW works driver is contesting the fifth round of the 2014 Blancpain Sprint Series at Portimão. His BMW Z4 GT3, entered by ROAL Motorsport, features a special golden livery, honouring the two world-titles and the silver medal he claimed last weekend at the Para-Cycling World Championships at Greenville (US).

Today, Saturday, started with the qualifying practice in the morning, which decided the grid positions for the one-hour qualifying race in the afternoon. Zanardi finished this session in 17<sup>th</sup> but was confident for the afternoon, knowing that his BMW Z4 GT3 shows its strengths particularly over the long distance of a race.

However, the race did not go according to plan for Zanardi. In the turmoil of the first lap, he and his team-mate Stefano Colombo (IT) had an unfortunate contact, forcing both of them to spin. While Colombo was stranded in the gravel, Zanardi was able to re-join the race in 16<sup>th</sup>. He then made up a couple more positions and took the chequered flag in 14<sup>th</sup>.

"Of course it is very unfortunate what happened on the first lap between me and my team-mate," Zanardi said afterwards. "After the accident, the car was a little bit damaged and this compromised my race. Nevertheless, my pace was not too bad in comparison to all the other BMWs. Now my mechanics and engineers will work hard to prepare the car for tomorrow's main race, and I am convinced we will have a good chance to get a decent result."

The qualifying race was won by Hari Proczyk (AT) and Jeroen Bleekemoelen (NL). The highest placed BMW car was the BMW Z4 GT3 of BMW Sports Trophy Team Brasil driven by Sergio Jimenez and Caca Bueno (both BR) who finished ninth. Tomorrow's main race will start at 14:45 local time.

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