



BMW Motorsport

BMW works driver Alessandro Zanardi puts in a strong performance in the heat at Portimão.

Portimão (PT), 7th September 2014. BMW works driver Alessandro Zanardi (IT) put in a strong fight back in the main race of the Blancpain Sprint Series at Portimão (PT) today, Sunday. After a long hour of intense racing, he finished ninth in his BMW Z4 GT3, being the best placed BMW driver today. With temperatures up to 30 degrees Celsius, driving was a particularly exhausting task for Zanardi. This did not prevent him from impressing with a strong performance from 14th on the grid.

After a difficult qualifying race on Saturday, in which his car was damaged on the first lap, Zanardi was confident for this Sunday. He predicted that for the main race a stronger result would be possible with his BMW Z4 GT3 entered by ROAL Motorsport. Right from the start he was pushing forward and made up position after position. He also came safely through all the close fights in the early stages of the race, while several other drivers crashed. After the first quarter of the race he had improved to eighth.

After 25 minutes, he came in for his mandatory pit stop, with his crew doing an excellent job when changing his tyres. As a result, Zanardi further improved in the rankings: When all the cars had done their stops, he had climbed up to fifth. The second part of the race turned out to be more difficult for Zanardi. The immense heat in the cockpit began to make him struggle. In addition, he had problems braking with his prosthetic leg because of the extremely bumpy track surface. Due to this, he could not attack properly any longer in battles and dropped back to ninth.

“It was incredibly hard because of the heat. It was extremely hot in the car and physically it was one of the hardest races of my life, including para-cycling”, Zanardi stated after the race. “But I am relatively pleased with the result because I think we got the maximum that we could achieve. My main problem was braking on the very bumpy surface with my prosthetic leg. I had to brake very early and still I was going too deep into the corner. That was when the other cars overtook me in my second stint. Anyway, we can be satisfied. We came home with a decent result, we brought the car to the finish without a single scratch and we can go to Zolder confidently.”

The main race was won by Maximilian Götz (DE) and Maximilian Buhk (DE). Zanardi was the best placed BMW driver, while the other four BMW Z4 GT3s in the field finished 13th to 16th. Portimão hosted the fifth round of the 2014 Blancpain Sprint Series. The next round will be held from 17th to 19th October in Zolder (BE).

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