



24h Spa-Francorchamps 2015

Official 24h Spa test day: BMW Sports Trophy Team Marc VDS sets fastest lap time – Eight BMW teams test with nine BMW Z4 GT3 cars at “Circuit de Spa-Francorchamps”.

Spa-Francorchamps (BE), 24th June 2015. The next highlight of the 2015 endurance season is just around the corner for BMW Motorsport: the iconic 24-hour race at Spa-Francorchamps (BE) gets underway in just 30 days from now. The official test day at the “Circuit de Spa-Francorchamps” on Wednesday heralded the final phase of preparations for the BMW teams. Eight BMW teams sent a total of nine BMW Z4 GT3s onto the legendary circuit.

Six BMW works drivers were also in action at the 7.004-kilometre track in the Ardennes, including BMW DTM drivers Augusto Farfus (BR), Maxime Martin (BE), Timo Glock (DE) and Bruno Spengler (CA), who now head to the Norisring (DE) for the third race weekend of the 2015 DTM season, which begins on Friday. Farfus and Martin will strengthen the driver line-up at BMW Sports Trophy Team Marc VDS for the 24 Hours of Spa-Francorchamps. Glock and Spengler join forces with double amputee and fellow BMW works driver Alessandro Zanardi (IT) at the wheel of a modified BMW Z4 GT3 run by ROAL Motorsport.

The Triple Eight Racing team also received welcome support during the test day at Spa-Francorchamps: BMW works driver Dirk Müller (DE) added his wealth of experience to the team. He will share the cockpit with Joe Osborne (GB), Lee Mowle (GB) and Ryan Ratcliff (GB) at the 24-hour race on 25th and 26th July. The test was repeatedly interrupted by numerous red flags, particularly in the morning. For this reason, the teams used the afternoon session to complete their long runs. In dry conditions, the pairing of Martin/Farfus clocked the fastest time of the day (2:19.034 minutes) in the number 45 BMW Z4 GT3. Their team-mates at BMW Sports Trophy Team Marc VDS, Markus Palttala (FI) and Nick Catsburg (NL), were just 0.324 seconds off the fastest time in third place. BMW Sports Trophy Team Brazil, Team Russia by Barwell, Ecurie Ecosse and the TDS Racing and Boutsen Ginion teams also completed their test laps successfully at “Circuit de Spa-Francorchamps”.

Quotes from the BMW works drivers:

Augusto Farfus (#45 BMW Z4 GT3, BMW Sports Trophy Team Marc VDS):

“There were a lot of red flags being waved this morning, which was obviously not ideal. Despite this, we still managed to gather valuable data and improve the car. As far as our expectations ahead of the 24-hour race are concerned, I cannot really say for definite right now. Although we do not necessarily compete with the fastest overall package, we do have the necessary consistency and a very strong driver line-up, which should enable us to be successful. However, it goes without saying that we must first finish, then we’ll see how we have got on. At the moment I seem to be alternating between two extremes: I must now travel from one of the longest circuits in Europe to the DTM at the Norisring – probably the shortest circuit in the world. These are exciting weeks for me.”



Maxime Martin (#45 BMW Z4 GT3, BMW Sports Trophy Team Marc VDS):

"The test went very well. The car worked flawlessly, which allowed us to complete an extensive programme of testing. We tried out a lot of things and consistently made alterations to find the perfect set-up and balance for the 24-hour race. Our lap times are very good, and we set the fastest time today. A test day is obviously of no major significance yet, and it is important for the car to be fast for the entire 24 hours. However, it is always better to be up near the front than not. We are quite happy with the situation."

Alessandro Zanardi (#9 BMW Z4 GT3, ROAL Motorsport):

"I am quite satisfied with the job we have done so far. I can drive the car better than last year, and this is fantastic as at first we were trying to develop something that allows Timo and Bruno to jump into the car and drive to the best of their abilities, in spite of the aids we have installed for me. We not only achieved that, but what we developed helps me to get a better feel for the brake pedal and to attack with the car even more. The ergonomics in the car definitely suit me better than what we had before. So we now could turn our focus to the set-up of the car. Over the single lap it seems like other people are slightly faster than us, but we were focusing on doing kilometres and completing long-runs, and the car is performing well especially over the distance. For sure we have more work to do, but we know what direction we have to take."

Timo Glock (#9 BMW Z4 GT3, ROAL Motorsport):

"As before today I only knew the circuit from my time in Formula One, it was important for me to get behind the wheel of the BMW Z4 GT3 and complete a few test laps here in Spa. It is astonishing how quickly the car corners, despite its weight. I am glad we were able to take another step forward with regard to the 24 Hours of Spa – both in terms of the development of the car and as a team. I believe we are well prepared. I am looking forward to returning in July for the actual race itself."

Bruno Spengler (#9 BMW Z4 GT3, ROAL Motorsport):

"It is ten years since I last drove here in Spa. Back then it was in a DTM car. Therefore, I first had to re-learn the circuit and then take my time getting used to it again. The test laps really helped me with this. The BMW Z4 GT3 is great fun to drive on this track, especially going flat-out through Eau Rouge and Blanchimont. There is huge anticipation ahead of the 24-hour race. I have great respect for this iconic event and, in particular, for all the drivers taking part. Sixty six cars will be on the track at the same time. A lot can happen. However, like me, my team-mates Alex Zanardi and Timo Glock have already experienced a lot in racing. We are well equipped to deal with this."

Dirk Müller (#888 BMW Z4 GT3, Triple Eight Racing):

"I am already looking forward to supporting Triple Eight Racing at the 24 Hours of Spa. It is a fantastic race and a great team. Unfortunately I was unable to take part last year as it clashed with a race in the USA. That makes me all the happier to be here this year. We used the test to try out one or two things with the set-up of the BMW Z4 GT3. The test went well and I am sure that we will be well prepared to push hard with the number 888 BMW Z4 GT3 in the Pro-Am class."



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