



24h Spa-Francorchamps

**Last 24h appearance for the BMW Z4 GT3, the “Dream Team”, and an anniversary: strong BMW contingent for the Spa 24 Hours.**

Spa-Francorchamps (BE), 21<sup>st</sup> July 2015. The countdown is on to the next highlight of the 2015 endurance racing season: the iconic 24-hour race at Spa-Francorchamps (BE) will be held for the 67<sup>th</sup> time this weekend (25<sup>th</sup>/26<sup>th</sup> July). This year's marathon in the Ardennes marks a special anniversary for BMW: it is exactly 50 years since the manufacturer claimed the first of its 21 victories at this classic in 1965. Pascal Ickx (BE) and Gérard Langlois van Ophem (BE) triumphed with the BMW 1800 TI/SA.

In 2015, a strong contingent of eight BMW teams will compete in Belgium. In total, they will send 11 BMW Z4 GT3s into action at the “Circuit de Spa-Francorchamps”. A host of BMW works drivers will take on the challenge presented by this unique endurance race and will bolster the BMW privateer teams.

“This year's 24 Hours of Spa-Francorchamps is very special for BMW Motorsport in many regards,” said BMW Motorsport Director Jens Marquardt. “It is exactly 50 years since BMW celebrated its first victory in the Ardennes. A further 20 triumphs have followed to date. On this anniversary, we compete with many BMW Z4 GT3s in Belgium in 2015. This is the last major appearance by this car, and the goal is to continue our success story in Spa – preferably with another victory, of course. There have been many races, in which the BMW Z4 GT3 has missed out on victory at a 24-hour classic by little more than a hair's breadth. Therefore, we will be doing everything in our power to ensure this magnificent car is given a worthy send-off on the 24-hour stage. At the same time, the race is the highlight of a unique project: Alex Zanardi (IT) is joining forces with Timo Glock (DE) and Bruno Spengler (CA). To ensure that Alex can alternate with Timo and Bruno at the wheel of the BMW Z4 GT3, despite his physical restrictions, our engineers have invested a lot of time and developed innovative solutions over the past few months. I am certain that this extraordinary combination of drivers will thrill the fans.”

BMW DTM drivers Augusto Farfus (BR) and Maxime Martin (BE) will share the cockpit of the number 45 BMW Z4 GT3, run by BMW Sports Trophy Team Marc VDS, with Dirk Werner, himself a BMW works driver in the United SportsCar Championship (USCC). Werner's fellow USCC driver Lucas Luhr (DE) will be in action in the number 46 car, alongside Markus Palttala (FI) and Nick Catsburg (NL). After second place last year and having set the fastest time at the official 24h test day, BMW Sports Trophy Team Marc VDS is one of the favourites for overall victory.

Team Principal Bas Leinders' (BE) outfit will field a third BMW Z4 GT3 at its home race: the “Marc VDS & Friends Racing Against Cancer” car competes with a prominent squad of drivers in aid of the Belgian cancer foundation. In Pascal Witmeur, Jean-Michel Martin, Marc Duez and Eric van de Poele, this car features a quartet of Belgian drivers who have enjoyed major success with BMW in the past.



Three current BMW works drivers – Alessandro Zanardi (IT), Timo Glock (DE) and Bruno Spengler (CA) – are at the heart of a very special project in Spa-Francorchamps: amputee Zanardi will share the cockpit with able-bodied drivers for the first time. The BMW Motorsport engineers have modified the BMW Z4 GT3 with innovative technical solutions for this extraordinary first. The number nine car will be run by ROAL Motorsport.

The Triple Eight Racing team will also receive prominent support in the Pro-Am class: Dirk Müller (DE) will support Joe Osborne (GB), Ryan Ratcliffe (GB) and Lee Mowle (GB) at the wheel of the BMW Z4 GT3. BMW Sports Trophy Team Brazil, Team Russia by Barwell, Classic & Modern Racing, Ecurie Ecosse, TDS Racing and Boutsen Ginion will also take on the challenging “Circuit de Spa-Francorchamps”.

This year, the 24 Hours of Spa again forms the highlight of the season in the Blancpain Endurance Series. The top 20 positions on the grid will be determined during the 15-minute Superpole from 15:30 on Friday 24<sup>th</sup> July. The race gets underway at 16:30 on Saturday 25<sup>th</sup> July and finishes exactly 24 hours later at 16:30 on Sunday 26<sup>th</sup> July.

**Quotes from the BMW works drivers:**

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

“I cannot wait for the race and am very grateful to BMW for giving me the opportunity to race at Spa-Francorchamps. We are well prepared for the weekend. The BMW Z4 GT3 is an outstanding car, which will show its strengths in Spa. My team-mates are fantastic drivers and great guys. And BMW Motorsport and ROAL Motorsport are supporting us perfectly. The overall package of car, drivers, team and engineers is excellent. We obviously know that racing is unpredictable – particularly 24-hour races. However, we can set our goals high. I would be happy if we finished in the top five – but not surprised. Every one of us has shown he has the performance to achieve this. All we have to do now is put this together as a team and get a result to make BMW proud.”

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

“I am really looking forward to my first 24-hour race. It is a great honour for me to be part of this extraordinary project with Alex Zanardi and Bruno Spengler. The circuit in Spa is absolutely fantastic. I know it very well from my time in Formula One. I drove Eau Rouge in the BMW Z4 GT3 on the test day ahead of the 24 Hours of Spa. It was fantastic fun. I am looking forward to seeing how the race pans out for us.”

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

“Spa is one of the most important 24-hour races in the world – and I am pleased to be racing there alongside Alex and Timo. We get on very well and, together with BMW Motorsport and ROAL Motorsport, are a great team. We face a big challenge, but I am really looking forward to it and am very motivated. As a racing driver, you obviously think about performance and want to drive as well and quickly as possible. However, we keep experiencing moments, in which we are made aware that this is a unique team. I am incredibly proud to be driving with Alex. That makes this venture even more fun and gives me even more motivation.”



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

“Spa is one of the best, if not the best, GT endurance race in the world. The driver line-up is obviously very strong. We showed at the official test day that our pace is very competitive and the car is outstanding. It is obviously a long race, but we have a strong overall package. I am very proud to share the cockpit with Maxime and Dirk. It is going to be fantastic and very intense.”

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

“This race is very special for me every year. It is basically my home race, as this is the only race I drive in Belgium. My father won here on four occasions, so it is almost like a family event. I really want to win here. There will be a lot of spectators, which I will enjoy. The tests went well, but it goes without saying that these times are not really that significant. However, our overall package is good. Furthermore, we have an outstanding driver line-up, so we could have a really good chance.”

**Dirk Werner (Number 45 BMW Z4 GT3, BMW Sports Trophy Team Marc VDS):**

“I am really looking forward to the race. On the one hand, I just love this circuit. On the other hand, I know that the team works very passionately at its home race. Last year we were very close to overall victory. Everyone in the team will do everything in their power to win this race. That is my goal, as I have already made three appearances on the podium in the past. This is also the final 24-hour race for the BMW Z4 GT3, and I think that everyone is determined to give this car a worthy send-off with a victory.”

**Lucas Luhr (Number 46 BMW Z4 GT3, BMW Sports Trophy Team Marc VDS):**

“Last year we finished runners-up, just seven seconds behind the winners. This year, my clear goal is to win by seven seconds. It is a fantastic race. There are an awful lot of cars on the track. Because of this, it is vital to stay out of all the aggro, progress well through traffic, and make the right strategic decisions. I love this circuit. It is one of the old, iconic circuits, on which you have to show a good amount of courage. We are well prepared. Hopefully we will manage to bid farewell to the BMW Z4 GT3 with an overall victory.”

**Overview of the BMW teams and cars at the 24 Hours of Spa-Francorchamps 2015:**

**PRO-CUP:**

Number 9 BMW Z4 GT3, ROAL Motorsport  
Alessandro Zanardi (IT), Timo Glock (DE), Bruno Spengler (CA)

Number 45 BMW Z4 GT3, BMW Sports Trophy Team Marc VDS  
Augusto Farfus (BR), Maxime Martin (BE), Dirk Werner (DE)

Number 46 BMW Z4 GT3, BMW Sports Trophy Team Marc VDS  
Lucas Luhr (DE), Markus Palttala (FI), Nick Catsburg (NL)

Number 77 BMW Z4 GT3, BMW Sports Trophy Team Brazil  
Sergio Jimenez (BR), Felipe Fraga (BR), Caca Bueno (BR)



**PRO-AM-CUP:**

Number 12 BMW Z4 GT3, TDS Racing  
Eric Dermont (FR), Henry Hassid (FR), Franck Perera (FR), Mathias Beche (FR)

Number 78 BMW Z4 GT3, Team Russia by Barwell  
Leonid Machitski (RU), Jon Minshaw (GB), Jonathan Cocker (GB), Phil Keen (GB)

Number 79 BMW Z4 GT3, Ecurie Ecosse  
Alasdair McCaig (GB), Devon Modell (GB), Oliver Bryant (GB), Alexander Sims (GB)

Number 888 BMW Z4 GT3, Triple Eight Racing  
Joe Osborne (GB), Ryan Ratcliffe (GB), Lee Mowle (GB), Dirk Müller (DE)

BMW Z4 GT3 „Marc VDS & Friends Racing Against Cancer“  
Pascal Witmeur (BE), Jean-Michel Martin (BE), Eric van de Poele (BE), Marc Duez (BE)

**AM-CUP:**

Number 15 BMW Z4 GT3, Boutsen Ginion  
Karim Ojjeh (SA), Olivier Grotz (LU), Jordan Grogor (AE), Ralf Oeverhaus (DE)

Number 30 BMW Z4 GT3, Classic & Modern Racing  
Jean-Luc Blanchemain (FR), Pierre Hirschi (CH), Christian Kelders (BE), Frederic Bouvy (BE)

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