



BMW Motorsport Junior Programme

BMW Motorsport Juniors gain valuable experience at the 24 Hours of Zolder.

Zolder (BE), 30th August 2015. It was the highlight of the season for the BMW Motorsport Juniors: the first race together at the 24 Hours of Zolder (BE). Victor Bouveng (SE), Louis Delétraz (CH) and Trent Hindman (US) alternated with their head instructor Dirk Adorf (DE) at the wheel of the BMW M235i Racing, eventually coming home 15th overall after 710 laps. The quartet finished ninth in the BMW M235i Racing Cup class.

After Thursday's qualifying was dominated by heavy rain, Zolder was at its best in summery conditions for the start of the race on Saturday. Bouveng lined up 24th on the grid for the first stint, which took place in ideal racing conditions. In the first third of the race, the team lost time in the garage due to an electrical fault and seriously worn brakes. After that, the number 246 BMW M235i Racing ran without any problems. The Juniors completed flawless stints and clocked consistent lap times as they made up many places. All 11 BMW M235i Racings that started the race finished in the top 20 overall.

Far more important than the final result was the valuable experience that the BMW Motorsport Juniors gained at the iconic circuit in Flanders. This was the first endurance outing for all the Juniors except Bouveng, who contested the 24-hour race at the Nürburgring with the BMW M235i Racing media car and is a regular in the VLN Endurance Championship. As well as the unique challenges of a 24-hour race, the youngsters also experienced how to look after the car when driving it twice round the clock, how to act as a team, and how to share a car. The four-kilometre circuit in Zolder does not have a long straight and demands maximum concentration from the drivers. Given the traffic encountered during a 24-hour race, with cars of different speeds, this was another important test for the Juniors, and one which they passed with flying colours.

The Juniors' eventful week had started with a tyre workshop at Dunlop. The Official Partner of BMW Motorsport is the sole provider of racing tyres for the BMW M235i Racing, and offered the talented youngsters a glimpse of what goes on behind the scenes at its production facility in Hanau (DE). The Juniors were particularly interested in the elaborate and precise manual work that goes into producing the racing tyres.

Bouveng must wait no longer than next weekend for the next highlight of the BMW Motorsport Junior programme. He will contest the seventh round of the VLN Endurance Championship at the wheel of a BMW Z4 GT3 fielded by Walkenhorst Motorsport, who was also responsible for the Juniors' BMW M235i Racing in Zolder. The young Swede will deputise for Jesse Krohn (FI): the "BMW Motorsport Junior of the Year 2014" is in action in the European Le Mans Series with BMW Sport Trophy Team Marc VDS.



Post-race quotes from drivers:

Dirk Adorf (Chief Instructor):

“The Juniors experienced for themselves that you have to drive differently in a 24-hour race to a sprint race. You have to forget the racing driver’s natural instinct to drive as fast as possible, and drive as cleverly as possible instead – particularly here, where there is a lot of strain on the brakes. The brakes suffered a bit at the start of the race, but the guys then adapted their driving style and we were excellent after that. They learned a huge amount. More than at any test. The boys now know what the engineers want, and what driving style is better in the long term – and how to implement it. We forged a great team spirit. The week has brought us closer together. I am very proud of the guys for bringing the car home without a scratch on it and without incurring any penalty.”

Victor Bouveng:

“It was a crazy race, and definitely not an easy one. I did the start and thought something is wrong with the brakes. But it turned out that I pushed a little bit too hard at first. Then Dirk went out with the car – and he was quick, but also saved the brakes. That got me thinking. After a while, we Juniors understood what to do, we got into a really good rhythm and everything was fine. I am happy with my performance. It has been a very challenging race, but it will be very helpful for my future career. We are here to learn, and I am thankful to have the opportunity to do so with a fantastic team. Thank you to BMW Motorsport and Team Walkenhorst for making this possible.”

Louis Delétraz:

“This was not only my first 24-hour race, it was also my first touring car race. It was not easy, but very interesting – and I learned a lot. The most impressive experience was to drive in the night, my first double stint started around midnight. It was really important to have an experienced driver like Dirk in the car. You need a lot of experience in touring cars, and I could always rely on what Dirk said. I learned how to save brakes and fuel, as well as about strategy. I enjoyed working with my fellow Juniors, Team Walkenhorst and everyone from BMW – an amazing experience.”

Trent Hindman:

“Early on in the race you never think about the finish, just about how to tackle the next few hours. But for us, as we got closer and closer to the end, it was becoming real that we managed to change the strategy to save fuel, tyres and brakes. We lost a lot of time in the beginning, but we sorted out everything in the last 12 hours. A huge thank you to everyone from Team Walkenhorst, they worked hard to give us a great package. It was a pleasure to work with Dirk and the other guys from BMW Motorsport for the first time in a race environment. I took a huge amount of information. This is something, I will remember for the rest of my life. First 24 hours – I take it.”

Media contact: Jörg Kottmeier, Tel.: +49 (0) 170 566 6112, joerg.kottmeier@bmw.de
Ingo Lehbrink, Tel.: +49 (0) 176 203 40224, ingo.lehbrink@bmw.de

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