



BMW Motorsport

**Fighting spirit and determination: BMW works driver Alessandro Zanardi finishes BMW BERLIN-MARATHON despite a mechanical problem on his handcycle.**

Berlin (DE), 27<sup>th</sup> September 2015. BMW works driver Alessandro Zanardi (IT) is known for his fighting spirit and determination. He certainly proved he had these traits this Sunday at the 2015 BMW BERLIN-MARATHON (DE). Zanardi finished the 42.195 kilometre marathon distance despite the fact that the chain on his handbike had broken during the race.

It was his first appearance at the prestigious BMW BERLIN-MARATHON. It is Germany's biggest running event, with 70.000 athletes competing in this year's 42<sup>nd</sup> staging. BMW Brand Ambassador Zanardi started in the handbike category. In this class, however, only recumbent handcycles are permitted. So he had to change his usual handcycle to unfamiliar sports equipment he had borrowed from his friend Vittorio Podestà (IT).

Despite the fact that he was competing in a completely different type of sport than usual, Zanardi was showing a strong pace on the streets of Berlin. He had an excellent result in sight – until the chain on his handcycle broke with nine kilometres to go. But the Italian did not think of retiring from the race. He sat on the back axle of the handcycle and pushed the rear wheels with his hands for the remaining nine kilometres. After 1:50:32 hours he crossed the finish line, cheered by the massive crowd at the Brandenburger Tor.

"I had started with a handcycle and finished with a wheel chair, because I was pushing the wheels to complete the last nine kilometres. Obviously this is not a BMW," Zanardi said while laughing, and pointed to his faulty sports equipment. "It is a pity. The race was going very well. I actually surprised myself, as I was faster than I had expected I would be able to be with this unfamiliar type of handcycle, and at first I was able to stay with the leading group. When the chain broke, I did not want to retire. I absolutely wanted to finish this marathon in the city where I was born for the second time, and so I pushed my handcycle like an Olympic wheel chair over the last kilometres. It was a fantastic event. The atmosphere, the many, many spectators that cheered for us – it was just great. I would love to come back next year, and then I will attack again."

There is not much time for Zanardi to take a breather: Soon he will travel to Hawaii (US), where he will contest his second long distance triathlon on 10<sup>th</sup> October.

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