



24h Spa-Francorchamps

Start to the 24 Hours of Spa-Francorchamps: ROWE Racing sees both BMW M6 GT3 in the Super Pole action.

Spa-Francorchamps (BE), 29th July 2016. On the BMW M6 GT3's first appearance at the 24 Hours of Spa-Francorchamps (BE), both of ROWE Racing's cars made it into the Super Pole competition. The best BMW driver on Friday in the top 20 individual time trials was last year's winner Nick Catsburg (NL) in car number 98. It took him 2:19.517 to complete a lap of the 7.004-kilometre track. This sees Catsburg, Stef Dusseldorp (NL) and Dirk Werner (DE) start the 68th edition of the 24-hour classic on the 'Circuit de Spa-Francorchamps' from 15th on the grid. Clemens Schmid (AT, Mercedes) clinched pole position.

After heavy rain showers in the afternoon, the sun appeared between the clouds now and then during the Super Pole competition. After two fast laps, the second BMW M6 GT3, ROWE Racing's number 99, secured the 19th starting place. Alexander Sims (GB) achieved a best time of 2:19.865 minutes. Over the course of the race, Sims will share the wheel of the BMW M6 GT3 with Maxime Martin (BE) and Philipp Eng (AT).

BMW Team Italia, headed by team principal Roberto Ravaglia (IT), achieved 48 in qualifying. BMW works driver Martin Tomczyk (DE), who is competing in the 24 Hours of Spa-Francorchamps for the first time in his long and successful career, will share the cockpit of the #15 BMW M6 GT3 with Stefano Colombo (IT), Giorgio Roda (IT) and Max Koebolt (NL). BMW Team Italia is contesting the Pro-Am Cup. Boutsen Ginion Racing is also competing in this class; the team will attack the 24-hour race with the #12 BMW M6 GT3 and the drivers Karim Ojje (SA), Julian Darras (FR), Olivier Grotz (LU) and Arno Santamato (FR) from 52nd on the grid.

BMW starts the Ardennes marathon as reigning champion after the BMW Z4 GT3 celebrated victory last season in its last major 24-hour race. After the warm-up on Saturday morning, the race is scheduled to start at 4:30 p.m. CEST. 24 hours later, one of the 65 participating GT3 cars will be crowned the winner.

Quotes after qualifying and the Super Pole competition in Spa-Francorchamps.

Nick Catsburg (#98 BMW M6 GT3, ROWE Racing):

"My first lap was good, but I wasn't able to drive Eau Rouge flat out because my tyres hadn't warmed up properly by that point. On the second lap, Eau Rouge was perfect, but the rest of the lap wasn't ideal, I could have got slightly more out of it. I'm sure that we have a good set-up for the race. I have a lot of confidence in my team and the other guys with whom I'm sharing the cockpit of the BMW M6 GT3. I'm looking forward to it finally getting started."



Alexander Sims (#99 BMW M6 GT3, ROWE Racing):

"I came off the track twice on my fastest lap. That's disappointing, because I didn't exploit the full potential of the car. The race is a totally different story, but of course that doesn't make the 19th starting position any easier. We need to be careful at the start in particular, but I think that we're in a solid position. Consistency will be the key to success in the race."

Martin Tomczyk (#15 BMW M6 GT3, BMW Team Italia):

"It was a difficult qualifying session. The traffic in particular was a limiting factor. When 65 cars are on the track, it will be difficult to get a free lap, even on a relatively long track like Spa. We need to remain realistic for the race. Our aim is to finish the race and show consistency, then we will see where we end up on Sunday afternoon. The level is extremely high, even in the Pro-Am class. It is a totally different race from the 24 Hours Nürburgring, which I contested in May. Here, the cars are only a few seconds apart. On the Nordschleife we race alongside cars with hundreds of horsepower less than us. Spa is a different challenge."

Press contact:

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

You can find the latest BMW Motorsport media information and copyright-free images for editorial purposes online at <http://www.press.bmwgroup.com/deutschland>