



24h Spa-Francorchamps

**BMW M6 GT3 in promising position after five hours at the 24 Hours of Spa-Francorchamps – Martin and Catsburg intermittent leaders of the race.**

Spa-Francorchamps (BE), 30<sup>th</sup> July 2016. The 24-hour race at the legendary "Circuit de Spa-Francorchamps" (BE) is in full swing, and in the initial phase once again demonstrated why it is regarded as one of the most eventful endurance races on the motorsport calendar. Yellow flags, a safety car phase of almost an hour, plenty of traffic in the pit lane and drizzle continued to mix up the field. In the first five hours of racing, the two ROWE Racing cars worked their way into a promising position. At times, last year's winner Nick Catsburg (NL) in the #98 BMW M6 GT3 and Maxime Martin (BE) in the sister car with number 99 led the Ardennes marathon.

Dirk Werner (DE) drove the #98 BMW M6 GT3 at the start and made it through the first hour well. On lap 25, the BMW works driver was in fifth place as he headed into the pit for the first stop. Catsburg took over the BMW M6 GT3, but completed the majority of his laps behind the safety car. He was at the front of the field of 65 GT3 cars at the restart and has led the race a total of two times so far. After completing 113 laps, the #98 BMW M6 GT3 was in twelfth place.

The second BMW M6 GT3 in action for ROWE Racing dropped way down the field after its pit stop during the safety car phase, and was outside the top 30 for a while. However, starting drivers Martin, Alexander Sims (GB) and Philipp Eng (AT) were able to fight their way back up through the field as the race went on and collect laps in the lead. After completing 114 laps, they were back to the front.

Martin Tomczyk (DE) also delivered a strong performance at the wheel of the BMW M6 GT3. The BMW DTM driver is contesting his first 24-hour race in Spa-Francorchamps. He drove at the start for team principal Roberto Ravaglia's (IT) BMW Team Italia, and remained in the car with number 15 after the first pit stop for a double stint. Tomczyk went on an impressive pursuit. Within the first two hours of the race, the experienced driver managed to make up 31 places. He started from 47<sup>th</sup> on the grid and, as he entered the pit for the second time, handed the BMW M6 GT3 over to Stefano Colombo (IT) in 16<sup>th</sup> place. As the race went on, the team were forced to retire after an accident.

The fourth BMW M6 GT3 of Boutsen Ginion Racing, which started from 51<sup>st</sup> place, worked its way up the field during the course of the race and was in 36<sup>th</sup> place at one point. However, the car was forced to return to the pit after suffering tyre damage, delaying their race.

**Quotes after five hours of racing in Spa-Francorchamps.**

**Dirk Werner (#98 BMW M6 GT3, ROWE Racing):**

"I drove at the start, which went well fortunately; I was able to move up into fifth place. After that, the stint went really well without any real incidents, which was pleasing, and it allowed me to get into a good rhythm quickly. The car is fantastic, it is so much fun. It is always something special to start on a track like this in a race like this. Now we need to continue with good pit stops, consistent laps and a good



strategy. It is important that we don't make any errors, pick up any penalties or suffer any damage. That is what we are working towards."

**Stef Dusseldorp (#98 BMW M6 GT3, ROWE Racing):**

"I'm pretty pleased with my stint and my pace. Overall the laps so far have been good, the balance is right. We will definitely try to continue in this way. It feels really good so far. And it is always great driving into the night. The track itself is fantastic, but when the lights go on and you see the huge number of fans it is even more impressive."

**Maxime Martin (#99 BMW M6 GT3, ROWE Racing):**

"The car performed well during the entire double stint. The traffic on the track is always a challenge, but we have mastered it well so far. We were able to make two stops during the yellow flag phase, which gave us an advantage. I was still fairly cautious at the start. I wanted to make sure that we didn't get caught up in any incidents. That strategy has paid off so far."

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

"The car is fantastic so far. The number of cars on track isn't exactly making it easy for us. Our strength is in the turns, which makes it slightly more difficult to overtake, but it's working out well so far. I have a good feeling. That said, it's too early to predict the outcome of the race at the moment."

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

"I pushed the car to its limit. The BMW M6 GT3 performed well. It felt great completing fast, consistent laps. It was much more challenging at the start of the race because we didn't get the best qualifying result, which meant we had to overtake quite a few cars. I was able to work my way up the field and we were in a good position, so it's a real shame that our race ended early. It was so much fun driving here in Spa. It was a great experience for me. Kudos to the race organisers. There were a few incidents on the track, but they did a fantastic job."

**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

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