



Media Information
24h Spa-Francorchamps
30th July 2017

After a turbulent night: ROWE Racing team in the top 5 at the 24 Hours of Spa-Francorchamps.

- **Bruno Spengler, Tom Blomqvist and Nick Catsburg in the number 98 BMW M6 GT3 currently in fourth place.**
- **The night is characterised by yellow flags and safety car periods, as well as intermittent rain.**
- **All four BMW M6 GT3 still in the race.**

Spa-Francorchamps. In a turbulent night at the “Circuit de Spa-Francorchamps” (BEL), the ROWE Racing team worked their way into the top 5 with the number 98 BMW M6 GT3. After 357 laps of racing, the two DTM drivers Bruno Spengler (CAN) and Tom Blomqvist (GBR), and their driver colleague Nick Catsburg (NED) are in fourth place. The night was characterised by numerous accidents, which resulted in yellow flags and safety car periods. Rain from 3:00 a.m. CET presented additional challenges for some time at this year’s 24 Hours of Spa-Francorchamps. All four BMW M6 GT3s however made it through the night and are still in the race.

Starting from 42nd on the grid, Spengler, Blomqvist and Catsburg have delivered an impressive catch-up race so far at the 69th edition of the marathon in the Ardennes. After just a few hours, they had moved into the top 10, and they moved even further up the standings during the night. Catsburg was behind the wheel when the rain started. The team decided to make the mandatory brake pad change during his pit stop and then send him back into the race on slicks despite the wet track. This paid off as the rain eased off and the Dutchman subsequently moved up to fifth place. He handed the wheel of number 98 over to Spengler in that position. The 2012 DTM champion made up another two positions and was in third place when he pitted at 7:00 a.m. CET to switch with Blomqvist, who is keeping the BMW M6 GT3 on course for the podium.

Their team-mates in the number 99 sister car, Maxime Martin (BEL), Philipp Eng (AUT) and Alexander Sims (GBR), also went about moving up the order after their



bad luck in the opening stage. After just over an hour, a broken wheel fastening saw them drop right down the field. Since then, the trio has had an uneventful race and kept up a good pace. In the morning, they were in 19th place with their BMW M6 GT3.

BMW Motorsport Junior Nico Menzel (GER) and his driving colleagues Markus Palttala (FIN), Matias Henkola (FIN) and Christian Krognæs (NOR) are also doing well in the race in the #35 Walkenhorst Motorsport BMW M6 GT3. The trio lost a couple of minutes when Henkola was hit by another car and the front of the car was damaged. Krognæs took a short trip into the gravel in difficult conditions but the number 35 was able to stay in the race, with Menzel completing a double stint into the morning on his Spa debut. The trio are currently in 25th place overall, and 5th place in the Pro Am class. The fourth BMW M6 GT3 in the field, with Henry Walkenhorst (GER), Stef van Campenhout (BEL), David Schiwietz (GER) and Ralf Oeverhaus (GER) sharing the cockpit, was in 29th place in the morning.

Quotes after the night:

Bruno Spengler (#98 BMW M6 GT3, ROWE Racing): “My stint into the morning went very well. The car performed brilliantly and I think that the conditions in the early hours of the morning suited us. I pushed to the max the whole time, like in a DTM race. The team is doing a fantastic job in terms of strategy, which isn’t so easy with so many yellow flag periods. So far everything is going well, so now we need to wait and see what comes our way.”

Nick Catsburg (#98 BMW M6 GT3, ROWE Racing): “It was a really difficult stint. It started to rain and we weren’t sure which tyres to go for but the team made a great decision to keep driving on slicks after the pit stop. I thought they were crazy, but it turned out to be a good and clever decision. It was difficult at the start, but we kept the car on the track and then made up a few places and some time. So, from that perspective it was a really good stint.”

Maxime Martin (#99 BMW M6 GT3, ROWE Racing): “I had a really good double stint in the night. There were a number of accidents, which resulted in several yellow flags and safety car periods. Our car is good and it is a real shame about what happened to us in the early stages, but that’s racing. Now it’s all about finishing the race. Then we will see where we end up.”



Nico Menzel (#35 BMW M6 GT3, Walkenhorst Motorsport): “It was an eventful night, but we can be happy with the performance so far. I drove a double stint into the morning. There were a lot of yellow flags and safety car periods, but at the end of my stint I had about 30 minutes of driving with a clear track and I was able to keep up with the leader’s pace. The car is performing perfectly. We still have a few hours to go. The podium in the Pro Am class is still a way off, but with a bit of luck, we can still aim for it.”

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