



Media Information

IMSA WeatherTech SportsCar Championship

14<sup>th</sup> March 2018

### **BMW Team RLL ready for Sebring – Special anniversary for Bill Auberlen.**

- **BMW Team RLL competing in Sebring with two BMW M8 GTE cars.**
- **Anniversary in Sebring: 25<sup>th</sup> start for Auberlen in the classic 12-hour race.**
- **BMW Team RLL Principal Bobby Rahal: “Twelve hours at Sebring is definitely harder than 24 hours at Daytona.”**

**Sebring. The three weeks following the 22<sup>nd</sup>/23<sup>rd</sup> February test in preparation for the 2018 IMSA WeatherTech SportsCar Championship Twelve Hours of Sebring (USA) have been busy ones for BMW Team RLL as the team prepares for the second endurance race for the new BMW M8 GTE and hopes for a good result. Bill Auberlen (USA) will make his 25<sup>th</sup> start at the classic event this year. After he takes the wheel on Saturday he will stand second in all-time Sebring 12 Hour starts. Auberlen, Connor De Phillippi (USA) and Alexander Sims (GBR) will drive the No. 25 BMW M8 GTE at the “Sebring International Raceway”.**

Nick Catsburg (NED), John Edwards (USA) and Jesse Krohn (FIN) will pilot the no. 24 BMW M8 GTE. The experienced trio, along with Augusto Farfus (BRA), finished seventh in the GTLM class at the Rolex 24 at Daytona (USA).

An accident close to the end of the February test damaged the no. 25 car. The team elected to build up a new chassis for the 12 Hours instead of hastily making repairs.

**Bobby Rahal (BMW Team RLL, Team Principal):** “We are certainly more hopeful for a better race than Daytona was for us. There have been some BoP adjustments that will at least get us closer to our competition. And if we do get closer, we stand a good chance. Sebring is always a very difficult race where outright pace isn't necessarily the key. It's a hard race on the car, hard on the drivers. Twelve hours at Sebring is definitely harder than 24 hours at Daytona. We have a good track record at Sebring over the years. We have a lot of top-three's and a couple of wins.





Like any endurance race, but even more so at Sebring, it's always about staying out of trouble and not incurring any damage in traffic or anywhere else.”

**Bill Auberlen (#25 BMW M8 GTE):** “I believe we are all – drivers and engineers – getting to know and understand the BMW M8 GTE. We are getting closer to a set-up, the car is proving to be reliable, and I am really looking forward to my 25<sup>th</sup> start at Sebring. I am betting on the number 25. BMW’s first endurance racing victory in North America came at Sebring in 1975 with BMW 3.0 CSL number 25. This year is my 25<sup>th</sup> Sebring and I’m driving number 25. 25 – all the way.”

**Connor De Phillippi (#25 BMW M8 GTE):** “The BMW M8 GTE has responded well to our first big test at Sebring. The car has proven itself in the high speed sections of the track and is responding to our adjustments for the bumps that make Sebring such a challenge.”

**Alexander Sims (#25 BMW M8 GTE):** “I am very sorry my testing accident has caused so much extra work for the guys. Despite my mistake, I am feeling more confident in the performance of the BMW M8 GTE and feel we’ve made a positive step since Daytona.”

**Nick Catsburg (#24 BMW M8 GTE):** “Sebring is always special, such a unique track and a great atmosphere. Last year was disappointing, but I am sure we will come back strong with our brand new M8. After missing the February test I will have to adjust quickly and get up to speed straight away. I’m really looking forward to the challenge.”

**John Edwards (#24 BMW M8 GTE):** “The test was the first time I have had the chance to drive the M8 anywhere besides Daytona. Daytona is a special place, but it is a bit of an outlier. Sebring is much less forgiving. Brutal may be a better way to describe the circuit. Turns one and 17 are the acid tests for any car and, so far, the M8 feels positive and securely planted. With some more fine tuning, I am confident we’ll have a good showing.”





**Jesse Krohn (#24 BMW M8 GTE):** "Sebring is a unique place. Nothing comes easy at this circuit, but, so far, the M8 has shown well. It is quite a step forward from the BMW M6 GTLM and, I believe, has a potential to finish well."

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