



Media Information

FIA World Endurance Championship

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### **The people behind the machine: teams and drivers preparing for the 2018 WEC season.**

- **BMW Team MTEK and the BMW WEC drivers approach their first FIA WEC race in Spa-Francorchamps.**
- **Intensive physical, mental and organisational preparation for the challenges of endurance racing.**
- **Team principal Ernest Knoors: “Endurance races are just as extreme for the people as they are for the cars.”**

**Munich. The Six Hours of Spa-Francorchamps (BEL) on Saturday are the season opener in the FIA World Endurance Championship (FIA WEC) for the new BMW M8 GTE. The entire BMW M Motorsport team, BMW Team MTEK and the BMW WEC drivers have completed an intensive and strenuous programme. The focus was not just on the development of the new BMW M8 GTE - the people behind the machine have also been hard at work, meticulously preparing for the FIA WEC entry.**

BMW Team MTEK has been looking forward to this moment for over a year: the first race with the BMW M8 GTE in the WEC. When the new BMW M Motorsport GT flagship takes its place on the starting grid at Spa-Francorchamps next weekend, the long period of preparation will be at an end. “The preparation phase has been very interesting for us but we are delighted that it is getting started now,” said team principal Ernest Knoors. “We can hardly wait to feel the competitive edge in a race again.”

After four years in the DTM, BMW Team MTEK was tasked with preparing the BMW M Motorsport works entry in the FIA WEC at the end of 2016. The whole of 2017 was devoted to development and testing work, focussing on the new BMW M8 GTE. The FIA WEC is not just a challenge from a technical point of view. The endurance races – most notably the 24 Hours of Le Mans (FRA) – pose special challenges for each and every member of the team.





“I think that the big difference between endurance and sprint racing is the attitude that you have in each case,” said Knoors. “You have to prepare physically and mentally so that you can perform for six, twelve or even 24 hours.” BMW Team MTEK completed a workshop in Munich (GER) for all engineers and mechanics, concentrating on nutrition, mental preparation and specific recovery techniques for during an endurance race. “We put together a programme that dealt specifically with how you can prepare to perform under these conditions,” explained Knoors. “This must be part of the preparation, as endurance races are just as extreme for the people as they are for the cars.”

### **Driver fitness as the foundation for success.**

The principles applied to the team also hold true for the drivers. The four regular BMW WEC drivers Nick Catsburg (NED), Augusto Farfus (BRA), António Félix da Costa (POR) and Martin Tomczyk (GER) took part in a collective fitness camp at Formula Medicine in Italy as part of their preparation. This featured physical and mental training to give them the ability to perform at the highest level, even in the exceptional surroundings of a 24-hour race. “Nowadays you cannot be a successful racing driver if you are only physically fit, or only mentally fit,” said Farfus. “You need both.” That is why the camp placed as much importance on reaction and concentration exercises as on strength and endurance training. “The mental training helps me to recognise potential weaknesses and to work out how I can conquer them, even when I am woken at 4:00 at Le Mans and have to climb into the car,” said Félix da Costa.

### **Perfect preparation for pit stops.**

The 30-hour tests with the BMW M8 GTE represented the most extreme joint training sessions for the team and the drivers. All participants simulated the complete schedule for a 24-hour marathon – including preparation. The pit stops played a particularly important part. “We went through various scenarios for the pit stops and every team member had to react quickly without knowing what was coming,” said Tomczyk. “It might not be possible to prepare 100% for an endurance race but we did try to take a look at as many variants as possible.” Away from the track, pit stop training remains part of the team’s daily training routine.





Teamwork is just as vital during preparation as it is at the circuit. Nowhere else in motorsport it is so important for team and driver to act as one unit as in endurance racing. All four drivers have already experienced this at previous marathon races. In 2010, Farfus won the 24-hour race at the Nürburgring (GER) and Catsburg triumphed at the 24 Hours of Spa-Francorchamps in 2015. Tomczyk and Félix da Costa have also competed for BMW M Motorsport on the Nordschleife. “When you are involved in development from the word go, you work closely with the team and develop the car together - that creates a strong bond,” said Tomczyk. “All the drivers have been together at all the tests and we have met up away from the track as well. I think that we make a pretty strong unit.”

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