



Media Information  
24h Spa-Francorchamps  
18<sup>th</sup> July 2018

**70<sup>th</sup> edition of 24h Spa-Francorchamps: Ardennes classic features numerous BMW works drivers.**

- **ROWE Racing and Walkenhorst Motorsport to contest the 24 Hours of Spa-Francorchamps with the BMW M6 GT3.**
- **BMW works drivers from GT racing and the DTM in action.**
- **BMW, with 23 overall wins, is the most successful brand in the history of the race.**

**Munich. The final weekend in July sees the focus of GT racing return to the Ardennes. The 70<sup>th</sup> edition of the 24 Hours of Spa-Francorchamps (BEL) will be held on 28<sup>th</sup> and 29<sup>th</sup> July. BMW teams ROWE Racing and Walkenhorst Motorsport are contesting the anniversary race with a total of four BMW M6 GT3. Numerous BMW works drivers will take man the cockpits, including three previous winners of the Ardennes classic.**

In the ROWE Racing team #98 car, two-time DTM champion Marco Wittmann (GER), BMW works driver Jesse Krohn (FIN) and BMW Motorsport Junior Ricky Collard (GBR) will take turns at the wheel. The #99 sister car will be driven by BMW works drivers Jens Klingmann (GER), Nick Catsburg (NED) and Alexander Sims (GBR), all three of whom, like Krohn and Collard, are ROWE Racing regulars. Walkenhorst Motorsport is competing with the #34 and #36 BMW M6 GT3s. BMW works driver Tom Blomqvist (GBR), BMW DTM driver Philipp Eng (AUT) and Christian Krognes (NOR) will be sharing the cockpit of the #34 car. Catsburg, Eng and Sims have previously won the legendary endurance race. The #36 BMW M6 GT3 will be racing in the AM Cup, with regular Walkenhorst drivers Henry Walkenhorst (GER), Ralf Oeverhaus (GER), Anders Buchardt (NOR) and Immanuel Vinke (GER) at the wheel.

BMW has always enjoyed close links with the 24 Hours of Spa-Francorchamps, which was held for the first time back in 1924. To date, the record is no fewer than 23 overall wins, which makes BMW by far the most successful brand in the history of the Ardennes classic. BMW celebrated its most recent wins in 2015 and 2016. In 2015, the BMW Z4 GT3 crossed the finish line in first place on its final major outing. ROWE Racing immediately triumphed with its successor, the BMW M6 GT3, when the race car debuted at this classic endurance race in 2016.



In preparation for the 24-hour race, BMW teams took part in the official test day in early July. The first highlight of the race week is scheduled for Wednesday, 25<sup>th</sup> July: the drivers' parade in Spa's town centre. The 70<sup>th</sup> edition of the 24-hour race will start on Saturday 28<sup>th</sup> July at 16:30 CEST.

### **Comments on the 24 Hours of Spa-Francorchamps:**

**Jens Marquardt (BMW Motorsport Director):** "In addition to the 24-hour races at the Nürburgring and at Le Mans, Spa-Francorchamps is one of the real highlights on the endurance calendar. It is a thrilling event and a real festival of GT racing. We are convinced that our BMW teams are set up well for the mission ahead to improve the already impressive BMW statistics at this classic event. Experienced teams, the proven quality of the BMW M6 GT3 and great drivers – the ingredients are right, and as always with a 24-hour race, it's all about having that little bit of luck. We're keeping our fingers crossed for the BMW teams!"

### **Marco Wittmann (#98 BMW M6 GT3, ROWE Racing):**

"I have wanted to contest the 24 Hours of Spa for many years, but it hadn't ever worked out until now. It's been ten years since I last drove at Spa – back then it was with Formula BMW, and I won that time. I like the track; it is a beautiful natural racetrack, and there aren't many of them around these days. I'm really looking forward to working with ROWE Racing and my team-mates for this classic. Naturally, the goal is to be up there at the front. A podium – or a win – at such an iconic endurance race would be fantastic. The competition is great, and there are a lot of GT3 cars driving for the win, but I'm definitely really looking forward to it."

### **Jesse Krohn (#98 BMW M6 GT3, ROWE Racing):**

"Spa will be really special for me as it will be my debut in the Spa 24-hour race. It is something I have been seeking for years. I am going there with ROWE Racing and such a strong line-up, so it will be great. The races leading up to Spa have been progressive for us, the team has done a great job and we were making big steps with the car so I am sure we can be optimistic about the weekend."

### **Ricky Collard (#98 BMW M6 GT3, ROWE Racing):**

"Spa is the big one and definitely the highlight of the season. It will be my first 24-hour race in the BMW M6 GT3 and I am really excited about it. I did two 24-hour races in the BMW M4 GT4 – at the Nürburgring and Dubai. They went really well and I am looking forward to Spa. I think our package for the BMW M6 GT3 is very strong."



**Jens Klingmann (#99 BMW M6 GT3, ROWE Racing):**

“The 24 Hours of Spa is one of the absolute highlights on the calendar, for both me and BMW Motorsport. In my eyes, it is the most difficult 24-hour race in the world because there are 50 to 60 GT3 cars on the track all at the same time. Since they are all in the same class, theoretically they could all compete for the overall win. The field is extremely strong. It is also a very demanding track for man and machine so the challenge is great, but we are well prepared. I am really looking forward to the race and hope that we can get another win for BMW Motorsport.”

**Nick Catsburg (#99 BMW M6 GT3, ROWE Racing):**

“The Spa 24-hour race is always a highlight of the season. I have always loved the track and after winning in 2015, the event has become very special for me. The BMW M6 GT3 won in 2016 and in 2017 we were also performing pretty well. This year I feel that we have the car, we have a very experienced team and I have very strong team-mates. With this package, I hope that we will be in the mix for the podium so I am really looking forward to the event. Also the parade in the town makes Spa very special – and to be honest, I can’t wait for the event to begin.”

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

“I am really excited to go back and attack the 24-hour race again. I won it in 2016 and that was just the most amazing experience for me. It’s my third time there with ROWE Racing so I know the team very well. This year I have new team-mates with Nick Catsburg and Jens Klingmann. I am looking forward to working together and trying to achieve the best result possible for BMW. They had some good success in past years with the BMW Z4 GT3 and the BMW M6 GT3. Now we will try to continue that.”

**Tom Blomqvist (#34 BMW M6 GT3, Walkenhorst Motorsport):**

“I got a taste of the 24 Hours of Spa last year for the first time and I really enjoyed the race. It’s one of my favourite circuits, so obviously I’m excited to be heading back there this year for another crack. Last year, we were fighting for the podium until we had a technical issue so need to make up for that this year. I also have a great team and team-mates to share the experience with. We will be aiming for a good result without doubt!”

**Philipp Eng (#34 BMW M6 GT3, Walkenhorst Motorsport):**

“It goes without saying that I have fond memories of Spa, as that is where I celebrated my first victory in a 24-hour race and my first win for BMW in 2016. I hope that we can celebrate similar success. It is the best GT3 endurance race in the world,



it is probably the most closely contested race in which only GT3 cars compete. I am really looking forward to it and think that we have a good package. I am looking forward to working with Walkenhorst Motorsport. They are highly motivated and ambitious, and I hope that we can repeat the 2016 win.”

### **Overview of driver line-ups for the BMW M6 GT3:**

#### **#98 BMW M6 GT3 – ROWE Racing:**

Marco Wittmann (GER)

Jesse Krohn (FIN)

Ricky Collard (GBR)

#### **#99 BMW M6 GT3 – ROWE Racing:**

Jens Klingmann (GER)

Nick Catsburg (NED)

Alexander Sims (GBR)

#### **#34 BMW M6 GT3 – Walkenhorst Motorsport:**

Tom Blomqvist (GBR)

Philipp Eng (AUT)

Christian Krognes (NOR)

#### **#36 BMW M6 GT3 – Walkenhorst Motorsport:**

Henry Walkenhorst (GER)

Ralf Oeverhaus (GER)

Anders Buchardt (NOR)

Immanuel Vinke (GER)

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