



Media Information

DTM

30th July 2018

Alessandro Zanardi ahead of his DTM guest appearance: “I am more agile without my prosthetic legs”.

- **At his guest appearance at the Misano DTM round, Alessandro Zanardi will drive without prosthetic legs for the first time.**
- **Zanardi underlines the advantages this brings for him.**
- **From a safety point of view, driving without legs is no difference for him: in fact, this brings some interesting advantages.**

Munich. BMW M Motorsport and Alessandro Zanardi (ITA) are preparing for his guest appearance in the DTM races at Misano (ITA) end of August. At the weekend, the Italian completed the roll-out with the BMW M4 DTM, that was modified for his special needs, at Dingolfing (GER). A test will follow in due time. Zanardi has been successfully racing BMW race cars since 2003, but Misano will be a premiere for him: for the first time ever, he will race without his prosthetic legs. The BMW M Motorsport engineers developed a system for the BMW M4 DTM that allows Zanardi to brake by hand. In an interview, the Italian explains why driving without prosthetic legs brings nothing but advantages for him.

Alex, why is it more comfortable for you to drive without prosthetic legs?

Alessandro Zanardi: “Because, technically speaking, of the way the prosthetic sockets works. They stay in place thanks to a kind of vacuum effect and this of course does not allow any transpiration. But the limbs are the cooler of our body. We lose temperature with blood circulation through our extremities – so when I wear my prosthetic legs I am like an engine without cooling system. And this doesn’t help while you stay in the cockpit of a race car where the temperature often rises above a decent limit. When we started to study the Daytona 2019 project I told the engineers that this was the main change we should had look at. And when I was offered to drive DTM in Misano, we had already done sufficient work and progress to believe that for me to drive without my prosthetic legs would potentially also help the performance. The advantage I get driving this way, physically speaking, gets bigger with every lap. You cannot imagine the difference! I’m therefore sure it’s this will also be a better option for the two one hour races in Misano with the BMW M4 DTM.”



So far, you walked to the car and got in like every other driver. How will you get in the car without prosthetic legs?

Zanardi: “Getting into the car is not a problem at all – quite the contrary as without my legs I am much more agile than with them on to get in and out the car. It is ten times easier for me. I can’t use my legs for any other purpose than a leaning point. I have to drag them in to the car using the strength of my arms with which I need to raise the weight of my body. So without the legs I have nothing interfering in the movement and also I have less weight to move around. So yes, I am by far more agile. The plan is to get to the car with my wheelchair and to then jump into the cockpit. Then the same way to get out. And in case I would incidentally stop around the circuit and have to get out the car in a hurry: well, it won’t be nice for the ones watching, but I promise you I can walk faster on my arms on grass or gravel than I would with my fake legs anyway.”

As you are more agile without the legs, also the extrication in case of an accident will be even easier than before?

Zanardi: “Exactly. So this has never, ever been a concern. Not just for me but also not for the people who know me from a long time.”

Let’s imagine the case you are stuck with the car in the gravel: You just get out and walk away on your arms?

Zanardi: “Yes, as I said, it does not look super nice to see somebody walking away somehow like this, but in reality it would be easier for me to move away from the car – especially in gravel – out of my arms with no legs than it would be with my legs. I already made this experience: I was able to somehow walk on the gravel with my prosthetic legs and no canes but it wasn’t easy. And the chance that I maybe put a foot in a wrong way and fall is greater. This would not represent any practical danger, I have a long experience of ‘falling’, but of course this would slow down my process of running away from the car.”

“So overall it is a better option also from this point of view. This does not mean that if ever I decided to drive with my prosthetic legs again it would be unsafe. Of course we took all aspects in serious consideration because we did not want to bump any safety issue, not just for myself, or BMW, or more for other people, simply because is what you have to do when



you do things at this level. And we wouldn't start this new adventure if we didn't think we have it covered under this point of view.”

Note to editors:

In the coming weeks until Zanardi's guest appearance at Misano, we will release several features regarding technology, safety and other topics.

A social media clip about the roll-out can be found here:

<https://www.facebook.com/BMWMotorsport/videos/1890839127621906/>

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