



Media Information

DTM

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The new members of the BMW DTM family: A double interview with Lucas Auer and Jonathan Aberdein.

- **Lucas Auer and Jonathan Aberdein eagerly await their first season in the BMW M4 DTM.**
- **Spa-Francorchamps a highlight for both.**
- **In a double interview they talk about their first few months in the BMW family, the 2020 DTM season and their passion for racing.**

Munich. Everything is set for the first weekend in August. The DTM will hold its first races of the year at Spa-Francorchamps in Belgium. For Lucas Auer (AUT) and Jonathan Aberdein (RSA) that marks the start of their maiden season in the BMW M4 DTM. In a double interview, the two newcomers talk about their first few months in the BMW DTM family, the upcoming season, the attraction of Spa-Francorchamps, their passion for racing and what racing has taught them.

Lucas and Jonathan, how much are you looking forward to finally starting the season in a few weeks at Spa?

Jonathan Aberdein: "I think everyone is really looking forward to starting the season. It has been a long wait. For me, before the ITR test, it was something like seven months since I last drove a DTM car so I definitely can't wait."

Lucas Auer: "Yes, it is the same for me. I think that it will be a tough season. Such a long time not in the car, many of us just had one or two days of testing. So it will be tough but I am really looking forward to it."

You are both new to the BMW DTM family. What was your first impression when you met the team for the first time?

Aberdein: "I knew them a bit from last year, being kind of on the other side of the fence but my first impression was that they are a very professional outfit and are doing



everything by the book as it is supposed to be done. A very methodical and organised approach.”

Auer: “For me, I first of all remember a super warm welcome. Normally in such a big company with many people it takes a while, but I felt like I was part of a big family straight away. And I agree with Jonathan, everything is highly professional and well organised.”

Aberdein: “Yes, the same as Lucas. I felt very warmly welcomed already by those in higher management who I had been in contact with a bit earlier, and that extends to the engineering and the mechanics. I feel, as Lucas does, like part of a big family.”

The pandemic made direct contact with your teams impossible for several months, but how much have you gelled into the BMW DTM squad already?

Auer: “I was a bit lucky as I was already at the team before the pandemic, so at least I had already had direct contact with all of them, the engineers and all the mechanics. So we knew each other and we kept in contact virtually to analyse data and other stuff like that.”

Aberdein: “And even during the break we gelled quite well because we were still keeping in virtual contact, updating each other on the situation and checking if everyone was well in the family. I think in a way it even brought everyone closer together because it’s nice to have contact with people during tough times.”

Auer: “Yes, the contact was not only about motorsport. We were talking about the situation there, if each other’s families are okay.”

What do you like most about the BMW M4 DTM?

Aberdein: “Apart from that it’s a great car to drive, it looks really cool. The look of the car is something special, the front is very aggressive and I really like the LED headlights. There is just something about them that I really, really like.”

Auer: “Yes, I agree 100 percent. In addition to that, I found some very positive things when I tested the car, some details that suit my driving style. Overall, it’s a great-looking car and I feel very comfortable driving it, which is the most important thing.”



The season opener will be a challenge, a two-day event at Spa, a track that is new for most drivers in the DTM. How difficult will it be to get started with the first qualifying of the season with just one practice session in the morning?

Aberdein: "I think everyone has been dreaming of the DTM returning to Spa since they last raced there in 2005. So, everyone is excited and I would also say a bit nervous because these DTM cars have never been there before. There are a lot of unknowns, but it gives kind of a level playing field for you to have one 45-minute practice session and then to go directly into qualifying after such a long break like we had. Some guys had more test days over winter and that levels the playing field."

Auer: "For me it will be quite hardcore as it is nearly two years now since my last DTM race, and now there are different engines and everything. It will be tough, but I agree with Jonathan. It's a new track for everybody and it's the same for everybody."

You both know Spa from other competing there in other series. What makes that circuit so special and exciting?

Auer: "For some reason the track is magic. Not only because of the history. When you are in a flow and everything is perfect, the circuit is just impressive. When you do a qualifying lap on new tyres, no matter with which car, it's just fantastic. It's a great track with great corners. I am sure that we will see great DTM races there, it is always spectacular."

Aberdein: "Yes, definitely, it is spectacular. And I think Eau Rouge and Raidillon are probably the most famous corners in motorsport. That is definitely another reason. A further one for me is the elevation changes of the track. Watching on TV or watching onboard cameras really does not do the track any justice. You really have to go around and walk the track to see how far up and how far down it goes. It's quite unique."

Let's talk about the calendar. We have nine rounds on six different race tracks. Which one are you looking forward to the most?

Aberdein: "I think definitely Spa, as it's the first round and the circuit is the biggest rollercoaster in the DTM car that we will ever have in our lives."



Auer: “Yes, it’s 100 percent the same for me.”

We have many back-to-back races this year. Do you guys prefer that because you stay in the flow, or is it a challenge to race so often in such a short time?

Aberdein: “Personally, it’s something I really like. This year we have a calendar with two and even three consecutive race weekends. Three in a row is also new for me. I like that, but I think it will definitely place great strain on the mechanics and the engineers because on a race weekend they get very little time to rest as it is. To have three weeks in a row, travelling, not being at home, that will be tough.”

Auer: “Yes, it’s the same for me. As a racing driver, you want to go racing every week anyway, but it will be tough for the mechanics, engineers and everybody. But we can see in Formula One and other series that it is possible so I am looking forward to it.”

Neither of you are new to the DTM. What do you like about the series?

Auer: “I have quite a bit of experience around the world and the DTM is unique. The field is so tight and it’s so tough to even reach the top ten in this championship. When you look at the mechanics, engineers and everybody at track, at what a high level they are – that is just incredible. So it’s a super professional series, the touring cars are the fastest there are around the world; it’s the pinnacle of touring car racing.”

Aberdein: “It’s a top series with definitely some of the best drivers in the world after Formula One, and I would say at a similar level to Formula E. So, for me it’s great to compare myself to some of the best drivers in the world in one of the undisputed best touring car series in the world.”

Let’s talk about you guys on a personal level. You both come from families that have a close relationship with racing. But when did you discover your own love for racing?

Auer: “In my case, it was quite a funny start. When I was around four years old or so, the family was on the road, my father, my brother and me, and we stopped at a petrol station. There were some people driving around with karts and they had also mini-



karts. I assume that they wanted to have a laugh, so they put me in one and for some reason I did a couple of laps. They maybe were a bit scared that I might start crying or something like that. But from that day on I was totally crazy for it and that never changed.”

Aberdein: “I kind of grew up at the racetrack in South Africa because my Dad was a touring car driver there, but my own passion came slightly later after my father retired. I wasn't so interested when I was young, but when I was eight, nine or ten, my Dad took me to the racetrack for some reason and I just thought that it was the coolest thing in the world. I think that's what sparked my passion for it. I started karting and the rest is history.”

What are your hobbies, how do you spend your time off?

Auer: “I like skiing and mountain climbing. The area I live in is perfect for that.”

Aberdein: “I also like to be in the mountains, cycling and running and exercising. I also do a bit of sim racing now and then.”

Is there anything you are grateful for in your life?

Aberdein: “I think just being in motorsports, for sure. Obviously I am grateful for the racing itself, but also for the lessons that it teaches you. People involved in motorsports really have a tough time at some stage or another and I think they learn to break through that. That is a very valuable lesson that maybe some people don't learn outside motorsports.”

Auer: “I am grateful for my great family who support me. In regard to racing, I fully agree with Jonathan. It can be a tough time, travelling around the world alone, it can get tougher and tougher, and eventually you have your breakthrough. It teaches you a lot and gives you some real strengths.”

What are your goals for the season?

Auer: “My first goal is to return as quickly as possible to where I stopped in DTM. And the rest – we will see.”

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Aberdein: “For me personally, in terms of results, I would just like to be consistently running in the top five and then see how it’s going from there. My goal is to be consistent and to finish as high up as possible in the drivers’ championship.”

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