



Media Information

DTM

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Bart Mampaey: “From an emotional point of view, it is always nice to return to Spa-Francorchamps”.

- **An interview with BMW Team RBM principal, Bart Mampaey.**
- **Spa-Francorchamps is “a special place for the family and the team”.**
- **Mampaey also discusses the fascination of the BMW M4 DTM through Eau Rouge, the challenges awaiting at Spa, memories of Zolder 2019 and the compact 2020 season.**

Munich. Nine race weekends, three of them in Belgium: the 2020 DTM season is something of a home event for BMW Team RBM from Belgium. This weekend’s opening round will take place at Spa-Francorchamps (BEL), a racetrack of which Team Principal Bart Mampaey has special memories. That is followed later in the season by October’s double-header at Zolder (BEL), where the team enjoyed success with all three drivers last year.

In an interview, Mampaey talks about the 2020 DTM calendar with three events in Belgium, his family and team’s association with Spa-Francorchamps, which goes back decades, the spectacular first impression of the BMW M4 DTM at this iconic circuit, and his expectations ahead of the opening round and the rest of the season.

Three of the nine rounds of the 2020 DTM season are held in Belgium. What does this mean to you?

Bart Mampaey: “That is of course a nice bonus for our team. First of all, we have to congratulate ITR and DTM for making it possible to race this year. And apart from the special requirements that we need at the circuit it was also important to have a calendar which is as compact as possible. Compact also includes that the races are not held far away from the teams to travel. And in this respect having three rounds in Belgium is perfect for a Belgian team like us. Added to that, Spa is one of the best circuits in the world and Zolder proved last year that it is a fantastic track for DTM. It’s really great to have them on the calendar.”

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Especially the venue of the season-opener, Spa-Francorchamps, is a special place for you, your family and your team. What does Spa mean to BMW Team RBM?

Mampaey: "Spa is a very important place in the history of my family and the race team which was formerly Juma Racing, my father and mother's team. We have great memories of the 24 Hours of Spa those days, being very successful there from 1977 to 1984 with three victories and five second places, always with BMW and always being the best placed BMW. That was the first part of our history there. Then there was probably the biggest RBM victory at the race when the team started in 1997 with a double win in the Group N class, followed by another overall victory in 1998. And then of course Spa was also part of the FIA ETCC and the FIA WTCC calendars and between 2002 and 2010 we were successful there with Andy Priaulx. So Spa indeed is a very important place for the team, for the team's history and for my family."

Now you are going to race there with the BMW M4 DTM. You tested there one day already, what did you learn?

Mampaey: "First of all, it is nine years since we were on track there last time. In 2011 we did a test with the BMW Z4 GT3 there so going back there nine years later with the DTM car was great. The track was damp in the beginning but when it was possible to put the slicks on, I went down to Eau Rouge and shot a couple of videos of how the car went flat out through it, I think from as early as lap three onwards and that was very spectacular. The car with the downforce and lots of power as we have now in DTM, that's fantastic around that track. I really enjoyed it. I also had three or four other spots where I could go to and watch the car going through the fast sequences of the circuit. With the high mileage we did it was a successful test and we are looking forward to racing there. It will probably not be so easy, I think following each other, DRS and Push-to-Pass will also have a big influence, so the test was important to prepare the event as well as possible. And from an emotional point of view it is always nice to be back there, having memories from a very young age and now seeing the DTM car there."

What do you think will be the biggest challenges for the DTM car at Spa?

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Mampaey: “We saw at the test that because the car has so much power and downforce, which makes it a fantastic beast to drive around the track, it also degrades the tyres very quickly. We need to find the correct balance for this race-track and for the conditions that we will experience at that weekend. And for sure there will be the challenge of following each other, using what we have in the car with DRS and Push-to-Pass in a way that we optimise the lap for qualifying and for the race. What we learned from the test is that for sure the tyre degradation over the distance of the race will be a challenge and we will be focusing on that.”

Then the other Belgian circuit on the calendar is Zolder. Last year, DTM returned to that historic track and it was an unforgettable weekend for you...

Mampaey: “Yes, last year it was the second round of the season. On Saturday, we celebrated the first victory with Philipp Eng. It was a double-podium, with Joel Eriksson finishing second. Then on Sunday we had the pole position with Sheldon van der Linde and Philipp claimed another strong result with second on the podium. So it was indeed a very good weekend for us. We just have to see how it will be this year. It is much later in the season; it is a double-header event in October, so the circumstances will be quite different, the championship will be already in its final phase then. We have to see where we are at that moment and hopefully we can be as successful as last year.”

Does having three rounds in Belgium close to your team HQ at Mechelen make logistics and everything a bit easier for you?

Mampaey: “I think the calendar will be a huge challenge by itself so it’s good that we don’t have to travel so far, for the mechanics, for the engineers and for the trucks. It makes the challenging calendar a little bit easier. I think that it will help us, also with the double headers that we have at the Lausitzring, the Nürburgring and at Zolder, but the season is still quite exceptional and the logistics will be quite a challenge. I expect that for the team and the team members it will be one of the hardest seasons that we ever had, for a long time not knowing exactly when we start and then to have nine race weekends within three months. It will be very hard and hopefully we can commit to the championship and hopefully we will have one or more drivers being on the podium so we get some positive momentum with us every time we travel back to



Belgium, rebuild the car in the time we have and go to the next race prepared as best as we can.”

So what are the team’s goals for the season?

Mampaey: “We want to win the championship, as simple as that. We will do our best to enable our three drivers to challenge for the title when we come to the finale at Hockenheim. That is our goal.”

Media Contact.

Ingo Lehbrink

Spokesperson BMW Group Motorsport

Phone: +49 (0)176 – 203 40224

E-mail: ingo.lehbrink@bmw.de

Daniela Tadday

Media Relations Manager BMW M Motorsport

Phone: +49 (0)151 – 601 24 545

E-mail: daniela.tadday@bmw.de

Benjamin Titz

Head of BMW Group Design, Innovations & Motorsports Communications

Phone: +49 (0)179 – 743 80 88

E-mail: benjamin.titz@bmw.de

Media Website.

<http://www.press.bmwgroup.com/global>

BMW Motorsport on the web.

Website: www.bmw-motorsport.com

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