



Media Information
BMW Motorrad Motorsport
30th August 2020

Dramatic end for BMW Motorrad World Endurance Team at the “24 Heures Motos” in Le Mans.

- **Shortly before the chequered flag the #37 BMW S 1000 RR retired from P5.**
- **Strong performance in tricky conditions goes unrewarded.**
- **BMW privateer team GERT56 by GS YUASA secures the win in the Superstock class.**

Le Mans. The “24 Heures Motos” in Le Mans (FRA) came to a dramatic, unfortunate end for BMW Motorrad World Endurance Team. After almost 24 hours of racing, the #37 BMW S 1000 RR retired 12 minutes before the finish. The trio of Kenny Foray (FRA), Markus Reiterberger (GER) and Ilya Mikhalechik (UKR) were in fifth place at the time. The 2019/20 season marks the debut season of the team in the FIM Endurance World Championship (FIM EWC).

Traditionally, the endurance classic in Le Mans is held in April, but this year it was postponed until the end of August due to the coronavirus. The weather, however, was very much like the typical weather in April. There were intermittent rain showers and the 24 hours were characterised by changeable conditions and falls, with the safety car having to be deployed several times.

BMW Motorrad World Endurance Team started the racing marathon from second on the grid. The #37 BMW S 1000 RR took the lead in the opening phase. The first rain started after two hours, and made the surface very slippery. Foray's rear wheel skidded and he fell in the gravel, but was able to continue the race. The team was now in fourth place, the #37 remaining in this position until the early hours before dropping down a place into fifth. It rained again in the final minutes of the race, and Mikhalechik fell shortly before the finish line. He was taken to the medical centre for treatment, but suffered only minor injuries.



GERT56 by GS YUASA had reason to celebrate: The privateer BMW team celebrated victory in the Superstock class (8th place overall). The #56 BMW S 1000 RR was ridden by Stefan Kerschbaumer (AUT), Lucy Glöckner (GER) and Toni Finsterbusch (GER). Team LRP Poland finished in 14th place overall (10th place in the EWC class) with the #90 BMW S 1000 RR and riders Dominik Vincon (GER), Kamil Krzemien (POL) and Bartłomiej Lewandowski (POL).

The season finale of the 2019/20 FIM EWC, a 12-hour race in Estoril (POR), will be held on Saturday 26th September.

Quotes from the “24 Heures Motos” in Le Mans.

Marc Bongers, BMW Motorrad Motorsport Director: “It’s a real shame that our Le Mans debut ended so dramatically. Overall, it was great that a race was finally able to be held for the scheduled duration but the weather made it a very difficult, chaotic race, and it wasn’t possible to make any strategic plans for much of the race. On top of that, compared with the Bol d’Or we were unlucky in terms of the timing of the rain and safety car phases. But it was the first test of endurance for the BMW S 1000 RR in the FIM EWC, and we came through pretty well until shortly before the end, despite Kenny’s minor fall after two hours. We were able to see that with regard to consumption we are the best in the field, and we were up there at the front in the pit stops as well. The only thing we are lacking is a bit of pace in certain conditions. Which is why we are so disappointed that our race came to an end so close to the finish when Ilya fell in the drizzle. But we win together and lose together. The most important thing is that Ilya wasn’t hurt more seriously. A huge thanks goes to the whole team and the riders for their hard work before and during the race. Now we will rally ourselves, leave the disappointment behind us and focus all our attention on preparing for Estoril. We want to finish our rookie season with a strong result there.”

Werner Daemen, Team Manager BMW Motorrad World Endurance Team:

“I feel very disappointed, not only for me but for the whole team and all those who were working hard for a good result. In the first two races we saw that we are podium candidates in this championship and I think that this weekend we showed once again that we can fight for the podium and that we are able to fight for victory – if everything goes right. But this weekend, Lady Luck was not on our side, but that is also racing. Now we will take the positives, go forward and prepare hard for Estoril.”



Kenny Foray: “It was a good race, even if the result for sure is not what we expected because it is always difficult to finish like this. But I think that we need to look at the positives. The bike was incredible over the entire race distance, the pace of the riders was as well. For sure we need to improve in some areas, but I am pretty sure that this is possible because I believe in the team. And I think that we will have more luck in the next race.”

Markus Reiterberger: “First of all, huge thanks to the whole team, who worked so hard after the very good test and made further improvements to everything for the event. And to the organisers who made it possible for the race to take place. In the race, Kenny’s fall in heavy rain saw us drop down the field slightly, but all of us then did a good job, focussed during our stints and I was able to get a few very fast lap times during the night. We gave it everything, but it was difficult to catch the guys in front of us again. Which is why we would have been very pleased with fifth place in the end. The familiar pitfalls of endurance races made their appearance over these 24 hours: freak weather, crashes, safety car phases. It really was a very, very difficult and long race. Unfortunately, we didn’t receive our reward in the end. It’s a real shame for the whole team who worked so hard. But we need to keep looking forward. We have seen what we are capable of and we will build on that.”

Ilya Mikhalechik: “It was my mistake. I was too fast in my stint. The other guys slowed down but I kept going at my pace, made a small mistake, went too wide and there was a bump and I just lost the front. We were in P5 and I tried to give my best, as always. I want to say a big, big sorry to BMW and to my team who did a fantastic job over the entire weekend. The bike was really great and fast over the whole 24 hours and would even have been able to win the race. But the tricky weather conditions did not give us this chance. Sorry again to the whole team, to all the fans and everyone who supports us. Let’s not repeat this bad experience in the future.”

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