



Media Information  
BMW Junior Team  
25<sup>th</sup> September 2020

### **Generation game: BMW Junior Team and Marc Surer test BMW race cars from throughout the ages.**

- **BMW Junior Team meets Marc Surer, a member of the legendary BMW Junior Team from 1977, ahead of the Nürburgring 24 Hours.**
- **Surer and the BMW Junior Team test two BMW Formula 2 cars, the BMW 320 Group 5 from the 1970s, and the current BMW M4 GT4.**
- **Surer: “It is great to see that a system that launched my career and those of my colleagues back then is still in place today”.**

**Nürburg. Ahead of the Nürburgring 24 Hours (GER), two generations of the BMW Junior Team and their BMW race cars met in the Eifel Mountains. Dan Harper (GBR), Max Hesse (GER) and Neil Verhagen (USA) took two vintage BMW Formula 2 cars and the BMW 320 Group 5 for a spin for filming purposes. Marc Surer (SUI), a member of the legendary BMW Junior Team from 1977, took his place at the wheel of the modern-day BMW M4 GT4. Jochen Neerpasch, founder of the first BMW Junior Team and mentor to the current crop of drivers, was also there to witness the car exchange in person.**

**Video:** Marc Surer and the BMW Junior Team test vintage and modern-day race cars: [https://b.mw/Born\\_to\\_Race](https://b.mw/Born_to_Race).

A handful of legendary cars awaited the drivers in the Nürburgring paddock. Hesse took the wheel of the BMW 320 Group 5, with which the 1977 BMW Junior Team – consisting of Surer, Eddie Cheever (USA) and Manfred Winkelhock (GER) – caused such a stir in the German Production Car Championship. Harper and Verhagen drove the BMW Formula 2 cars from 1978 and 1979, which Surer and Bruno Giacomelli (ITA) used to race. Surer, who had previously put all the historic cars through a performance test, took his place at the wheel of the modern BMW M4 GT4, with which the current BMW Junior Team will contest its first 24-hour race this weekend.

“For me, it is always like déjà vu when I get back in the old cars,” said Surer. “It only



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takes a couple of laps before you feel as though you have never been away. You feel at home and everything comes automatically to you. It is all saved away on your hard drive.” For Harper, Hesse and Verhagen, the adjustment was somewhat larger. “At times, they had to operate the clutch, double clutch, and shift gear in a race car for the first time in their lives,” explained Surer. “For me, it was simpler with all the modern driver aids. The car was a pleasure to drive.”

The current BMW Junior Team was impressed by their test drives in the vintage cars. “It was unbelievable. The sound alone stirs up emotions that you no longer experience very often in modern-day cars,” said Verhagen. “I’d like to say thank you very much to everyone who made this cool experience possible.” Harper said: “It was a great privilege to drive that car here at the Nürburgring. I found it astounding how much the technology has progressed between my 1978 car and Neil’s car from 1979.”

Hesse also enjoyed his experience in the BMW 320 Group 5: “Awesome. The sound, the handling. You could feel straight away how light the car is. I only did a few flying laps, and take my hat off to the guys who used to go racing in these cars in the 1970s. At first it was a bit strange. You open the door and see a steering wheel without any buttons. There is just a switch to start the car – and then the gearstick for the manual transmission. It was incredibly enjoyable.”

Surer not only enjoyed the driving, but also meeting his successors. “The new BMW Junior Team is a similar mix of personalities and nationalities as we had back then,” said Surer. “The concept was very familiar to me – to select drivers because they are good and have been successful in their classes, not because they have a lot of money. It is great to see that a system that launched my career and those of my colleagues back then is still in place today.”

Back in the 1970s, Jochen Neerpasch was responsible for the concept of the BMW Junior Team. Nowadays, he still plays an important role in the training programme, as a mentor to Harper, Hesse and Verhagen. His summary of the meeting of the two generations: “It was wonderful to see these historic cars back in action. And being able to drive cars like those was like a second Christmas for our BMW Junior Team. Seeing Marc Surer together with the new generation of Juniors was also interesting. Our principle, that talented youngsters learn faster as a team, worked back then – and I am sure it will work this time too.”



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