



Media Information
24h Nürburgring
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An interview with the 24h Nürburgring winners Nick Catsburg, Alexander Sims and Nick Yelloly.

- **Nick Catsburg, Alexander Sims and Nick Yelloly brought home BMW's 20th overall win at the 24 Hours Nürburgring last weekend.**
- **Catsburg: "I had goose bumps throughout the final lap."**
- **Sims: "It was an emotional roller coaster."**
- **Yelloly: "It was my first big win as a BMW works driver."**

Munich. Nick Catsburg (NED), Alexander Sims (GBR) and Nick Yelloly (GBR) won the 24 Hours Nürburgring (GER) in the ROWE Racing #99 BMW M6 GT3 last weekend, securing their places in the annals of BMW Motorsport. There were two milestones to celebrate: 50 years after the first BMW overall win at the first ever edition of the 24-hour race, a BMW team topped the podium again, and it was also the brand's 20th victory at the 'Green Hell'. In an interview, the trio talk about the turbulent race, an emotional roller coaster ride and the importance of the win in their careers.

First question for you: How long did the party go on?

Nick Catsburg: "It wasn't all that spectacular. I was back in my room shortly after 2 a.m."

Alexander Sims: "It wasn't a wild party. It was just nice to sit at the bar and have a few drinks with the team and enjoy the success."

Nick Yelloly: "At least we were well enough the next morning to have breakfast together."

Sims: "Really? I can't remember that..." (laughs)

Hopefully you can remember the race! How important is the win at the 24h Nürburgring in your careers?

Catsburg: "Extremely important. It is my favourite event and my favourite track. I'd rank the win at the same level as my win at the 24 Hours of Spa-Francorchamps in



2015.”

Sims: “Along with my Spa win in 2016, this is definitely the biggest win of my career.”

Yelloly: “It was my first big win as a BMW works driver – and the first time that I crossed the finish line at the 24 Hours Nürburgring. To then get to celebrate the huge victory at the same time is right at the top of my list of triumphs.”

Were you aware of the historic aspect of the win for BMW – 50 years after the first win, 20th overall win and ten years since the last win?

Yelloly (laughs): “Absolutely. After all, we saw in the reporting often enough that this win would be very significant for BMW which makes the honour of having brought home this important win for BMW all the greater. I think that we will all only be aware of the full implications in the coming days.”

Alexander, Nicky, both of you were very close to winning with ROWE Racing in 2017, and ended up finishing second. Was that on your mind?

Catsburg: “I have actually finished second twice and said to the lads: ‘I definitely don’t want to finish in second again.’ And to be honest, when I kept hearing how quickly our opponents were catching up from behind on the radio in the closing stage, I thought: ‘Darn, please don’t let it happen again!’ Fortunately things went differently this time around.”

Alexander, how nervous were you having to sit back and watch Nicky in the extremely tense closing stage?

Sims (laughs): “As Nicky was in the car I was extremely nervous! Seriously though, it is a strange feeling when you are on the outside and don’t have any control over what’s happening. I had full confidence in Nicky’s capabilities, but we saw during the race that the BMW M6 GT3 worked well to varying degrees in different conditions. You can’t really do a lot as a driver in that situation.”

Nicky, we have to talk about the braking mistake in turn 1, when you passed the Audi that was in the pit...

Catsburg (laughs): “I was just so happy that I was at the front! The truth is that the track conditions changed rapidly on these final laps. I simply overestimated the grip slightly at that moment and made a minor braking mistake. Fortunately it isn’t a huge



problem there.”

Honestly, how much pressure were you under having to bring home the win as the closing driver?

Catsburg: “There is pressure in every racing situation. The driver is also under great pressure in the top qualifying or at the start. But I was a little bit nervous all the same, I have to admit. Obviously, the stress increases when you keep being told over the radio that your rivals are catching up so you need to push. You’re already at the limit and constantly have to weigh up how much to risk. On the other hand, it goes without saying that it is cool to be the one to cross the finish line at the end. I had goose bumps throughout the final lap. It was funny, because I had to keep telling myself that I just had to finish that lap.”

In which conditions did the car perform best?

Yelloly: “I think that our rivals had a clear advantage when it was really wet, but when it dried up, we were able to turn the balance of power in our favour, particularly with the ‘drying wet’ tyres. On a drying track we were clearly faster than our opponents. Fortunately, the conditions at the end suited us. I even had a full stint on slicks. They also felt really good.”

Did you feel honoured to be given the drive in top qualifying and at the start?

Yelloly: “It was definitely an honour. I knew fairly early on that I would be allowed to drive in qualifying. We only decided the starting driver shortly before the race. It’s great to have had that trust placed in me alongside drivers like Alexander and Nicky, who have both already enjoyed great successes for BMW.”

Alexander, you were in the car when the race was abandoned on Saturday evening. Was the red flag the right decision?

Sims: “It was the only decision to make. I was relatively fast compared to our rivals at that point, but it was honestly only a matter of time before there was a serious accident. There were sections of the track, Pflanzgarten, for example, where you could only guess where you were driving. You couldn’t see a thing. Race control did a really good job at that stage, because it was really dangerous out there.”



How was the restart for you on Saturday morning?

Sims: “It was an emotional roller coaster. My first stint in the wet was really difficult. I had the feeling that I was throwing away our chance of winning because I was so slow. I felt really helpless at that point. We simply didn’t have the pace and kept dropping down the field. Then, in the second stint it was the complete reverse. The track dried off, the tyres worked and suddenly we were the fastest in the field. I overtook one car after another and had a good feeling again. But I didn’t know if we would really be driving for the win again yet at that point.”

Nick, when did you first think: ‘Okay, this is for the win?’

Yelloly: “After Alexander started moving up the field and handed the car over to me, I knew that we were in a good position. Then, about halfway through my double stint I had the leader in sight and knew that if I could keep up with it, we would have a chance.”

How much help with the win was it that the BMW M6 GT3 has already done so many race kilometres on the Nordschleife and that you are already very familiar with it?

Catsburg: “That really helped not only us as drivers, but also the team. The car had no issues and we as a team didn’t make a single mistake either.”

Sims: “I think knowing the car so well helped us particularly in the changing conditions. In situations like that, as a driver you don’t want to be sitting in a car where you don’t quite know how it will react. We all have so much experience in the BMW M6 GT3 that we always knew how close to the limit we could push it.”

Nicky and Nick, you’re both in action again this weekend, aren’t you?

Catsburg: “That’s right. I’m at the airport again already because I’m contesting the 8 Hours of Indianapolis for Walkenhorst Motorsport in the BMW M6 GT3 at the weekend, as part of the Intercontinental GT Challenge. So, I’m hoping for the next win – but only for me, not for Nick!” (laughs)

Yelloly (laughs): “Obviously, because I will be in the sister car we’ll be rivals this time, so it goes without saying that I can’t stand Nicky one bit this coming weekend. In all seriousness: I’m flying this afternoon and am really looking forward to racing at Indianapolis for the first time in my life.”



Sims: "Okay. While you'll be racing again already, I'll be relaxing at home and enjoying my victory at the Nürburgring." (laughs)

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