



Media Information  
BMW Junior Team  
1<sup>st</sup> October 2020

### **BMW Junior Team makes impressive debut at the Nürburgring 24 Hours.**

- **Dan Harper, Max Hesse and Neil Verhagen round off their 24h debut with a class win and a top-20 spot in the overall rankings.**
- **24-hour race was highlight of the BMW Junior Team's first year of training.**
- **Jochen Neerpasch: "That was their masterpiece of the first year of their training together."**

**Munich. Learn, keep driving, don't make any mistakes were the objectives of the BMW Junior Team as they made their debut in the 24 Hours Nürburgring (GER) last weekend. Dan Harper (GBR), Max Hesse (GER) and Neil Verhagen (USA) not only ended up meeting these objectives, they also brought home a class win in an impressive manner and, finishing 19<sup>th</sup> in the overall rankings, were the best non-GT3 team in the whole field. Thus, the BMW Junior Team mastered the highlight of their first year of training with flying colours.**

When the BMW Junior Team moved into their shared house within easy reach of the Nürburgring in June 2020, the mission was clear. Prepare as well as possible in terms of driving, physically and mentally to survive the 24 Hours Nürburgring, possibly the most difficult circuit race there is. Countless hours later in the simulator, in the gym and above all in different BMW racing cars, one thing is clear, Dan Harper, Max Hesse and Neil Verhagen lived up to everything that those responsible for reviving the legendary BMW Junior Team of 1977 promised they would.

Jochen Neerpasch, who founded the first BMW Junior Team in 1977, especially is on hand to assist and advise the new generation as a mentor. It goes without saying that he was at the track this past weekend – and was visibly impressed by the performances of his protégés: "The BMW Junior Team really did experience the most difficult conditions you could imagine on their debut at the 24 Hours Nürburgring. But they mastered this extreme challenge with flying colours. That was their masterpiece



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of the first year of their training together.”

And the young drivers were happy themselves at the end of the turbulent race, which had to be interrupted Saturday night due to heavy rain and posed a challenge for all drivers – even the most experienced in the field – with the constantly changing track and weather conditions.

“That was an awesome race. Many thanks to the team, to Dan and Neil,” said Hesse. “We had very challenging conditions for our first-ever 24-hour race. So, to finish a race like that with a class win and a top-20 finish in the overall rankings is incredible.”

Harper said: “It feels fantastic to have finished the first 24-hour race as class winner and best non-GT3. Many thanks to the Walkenhorst Motorsport team and to BMW Motorsport for giving us the opportunity to contest this race. And huge thanks to my team-mates and to Jochen Neerpasch, who together with BMW Motorsport selected us to be the BMW Junior Team.”

Verhagen was the closing driver for the BMW Junior Team and brought the Walkenhorst Motorsport BMW M4 GT4 safely across the finish line, despite a moment of horror after a spin. After 78 race laps, Verhagen had a lead of almost nine minutes over the second-placed car in the SP8T class and finished 19<sup>th</sup> overall. Only cars in the top classes of SP9 and SP-X finished ahead of him. “Being allowed to be the one to cross the finish line at the end was a very special moment,” said Verhagen. “I can’t thank BMW Motorsport and the Walkenhorst team enough, both for the fantastic car that we were allowed to driver here in the 24-hour race, and for the opportunity to even be part of this BMW Junior Team.”

The 24 Hours Nürburgring 2020 was the highlight of the BMW Junior Team’s first year of training. They completed their first races at the Nordschleife in the BMW M240i Racing, to get their permit for the racetrack. In this entry-level car, Harper and Verhagen took a class win in the third race of the Nürburgring Endurance Series (NLS) season. Then, in the fourth NLS race, they upgraded to the BMW M4 GT4, with which the team will contest the rest of the Nordschleife season after the 24-hour race. In their second year of training in 2021, they will then switch to the GT3 car.

“I’m already really excited to see how they will do next time in the GT3 car,” said Neerpasch. “That is when the goal will be to be involved in the battle for the top



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spots.”

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