



Media Information  
BMW Junior Team  
26th June 2021

## **Youngest overall winners ever: BMW Junior Team claims its first victory on the Nordschleife with the BMW M6 GT3.**

- **Dan Harper, Max Hesse and Neil Verhagen win round four of the 2021 Nürburgring Endurance Series.**
- **Fantastic performance in a fascinating four-hour thriller.**
- **Jochen Neerpasch: "The way they withstood the pressure was impressive".**

**Nürburg. After four extremely exciting hours of racing, a dream came true for the BMW Junior Team, its first overall victory on the Nordschleife with the BMW M6 GT3. Neil Verhagen (USA), Max Hesse (GER) and Dan Harper (GBR) won race four of the 2021 Nürburgring Endurance Series. A brilliant performance saw them prevail against stiff opposition, making them the youngest team in the history of endurance races to win at the Nürburgring (GER).**

Harper laid the foundation for this success in morning qualifying when he secured second place on the grid for the #44 BMW M6 GT3. Verhagen was first behind the wheel in the race, and kept the trio on course for a podium finish from the opening lap. During Hesse's stint, some of the lap times he set were five seconds quicker than his closest rivals. A drive-through penalty, which the team received two hours into the race following a collision at the start, initially saw the team drop back through the field. However, this was to be just a brief setback.

With a good one and a half hours remaining, Harper moved to the head of the field in the #44 BMW M6 GT3. He then defended his lead superbly in a thrilling duel with the second-placed Audi. When both cars came in for their final pit stop at the same time, roughly 40 minutes from the end of the race, the Audi briefly took the lead. However, it only took Harper a few corners to retake the lead, as the team cheered on. After four hours of racing, the #44 BMW M6 GT3 crossed the finish line in first place. The car was run by BMW Team RMG.

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"That was a fantastic race," said mentor Jochen Neerpasch, who was spellbound as he followed the action in the garage. "In the 24-hour race the boys showed that they belong in the top class. However, they graduated in style here today. It was an outstanding performance. It was not gifted to them, but was a very tough race. The way they withstood the pressure was impressive. That is by no means a matter of course at this young age. The BMW Juniors have shown once again how well they work together as a team."

"I am just super, super happy. This is a dream come true for us all," said Hesse. "We worked hard all year and, unfortunately, were not rewarded with the result our effort deserved. I believe we have now paid the team back a little. The guys really put their foot down. A big thank you also goes to Augusto Farfus, without whom we certainly would not be here now. We are just happy and want to continue this way."

"Max and Dan did an amazing job; BMW Team RMG and BMW M Motorsport did an amazing job as well for the great car we had," added Verhagen. "We just got our heads down, we got into it, we also were able to get through the drive-through penalty and bring it back into the lead again. It was very impressive. Being the youngest overall winners on the Nordschleife is something super special. It has been amazing."

Harper said of his final one-and-a-half-hour stint, which developed into a thrilling sprint to the finish: "There was just full push from the very beginning as soon as I got into the car. I had the Audi right behind me. The whole way through, those one and a half hours, it was very intense. There was a couple of wild moments on the grass but I am just so proud of the whole team, BMW Team RMG, BMW M Motorsport and of course my team-mates Max and Neil. From last year, when the programme started to now we have come so far together and I think this is a bit of a fairy tale. I just hope that we can step onto the top step of the podium many more times together."

The Nordschleife season continues for Harper, Hesse and Verhagen on 10th and 11th July, with races five and six of this season's Nürburgring Endurance Series.

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