



Media Information

IMSA WeatherTech SportsCar Championship

19th March 2022

### **BMW M4 GT3 at the Sebring 12 Hours: Challenge for the podium ends with disappointing finish.**

- **The #24 BMW M Team RLL MOTUL BMW M4 GT3 finishes the endurance classic in fourth position in the GTD PRO class after twelve thrilling hours of racing.**
- **Turner Motorsport finishes Bill Auberlen's 500th BMW race in fourth in the GTD class.**
- **Andreas Roos: "This race has once again confirmed that endurance racing not only has highlights in store but can also bring setbacks."**

**Sebring. On its first appearance at the 12 Hours of Sebring (USA), the brand-new BMW M4 GT3 challenged at the very top of both the GTD PRO and the GTD class until the final stages. But it was not meant to be and the podium was narrowly missed in both classes. In GTD PRO, BMW M Team RLL's #24 MOTUL BMW M4 GT3, driven by Philipp Eng (AUT), Marco Wittmann (GER) and Nick Yelloly (GBR), crossed the line in fourth. The same result was scored by Turner Motorsport in the GTD class with the #96 BMW M4 GT3. The Florida endurance classic marked the second round of the 2022 IMSA WeatherTech SportsCar Championship.**

Starting from seventh on the grid, the #24 MOTUL BMW M4 GT3 moved up the field into the podium positions and briefly lead the GTD PRO class by the halfway mark. From then on it was involved in a thrilling battle for the lead and the second six hours turned into a proper sprint race. The car ran like a clockwork, the team acted cleverly on strategy and Eng, Yelloly and Wittmann faultlessly completed their laps. The #24 was lying in second position until one hour before the chequered flag when it suffered a gearbox issue and dropped off the podium positions.

The #25 MOTUL BMW M4 GT3 also raced into top three in the opening stage of the race but suffered a setback after two hours. A power steering issue resulted in a long repair. This dropped the trio of Augusto Farfus (BRA), John

**Motorsport**



Edwards (USA) and Connor De Phillippi (USA) down the field but they continued the race. They brought the #25 home in tenth place.

The two BMW M Motorsport teams in the GTD class also both had an eventful 12 hours that did not end with the top results they would have deserved. At Turner Motorsport, Sebring marked the 500th BMW race for Bill Auberlen (USA) and until the eighth hour it looked that the Californian could have lots of reason to celebrate at that milestone. Auberlen, who shared the #96 BMW M4 GT3 with Robby Foley and Michael Dinan (both USA), had taken the GTD lead but then got hit at the rear by another competitor and spun into the grass. This dropped the #96 back to eighth in the class. But the Turner Motorsport drivers fought their way back and with three and a half hours to go, Auberlen brought the car back in the lead. The #96 stayed at the very top before losing ground in the final stages due to a team mistake and crossing the line in fourth.

The newest BMW M Motorsport family member, Paul Miller Racing, experienced cruel bad luck in the race after showing convincing performances in all sessions. In the first three hours of racing, the #1 BMW M 4 GT3 was fighting for the very top in GTD class. But then it became victim of an LMP incident. A car trying to avoid a spinning LMP2 car hit the #1 on the left rear damaging the suspension. This was a major setback on Paul Miller Racing's way to a very strong result in their first race with the BMW M4 GT3. Madison Snow, Bryan Sellers (both USA) and Erik Johansson (SWE) finished 16th in the GTD class.

The BMW M Motorsport team's BMW M4 GT4 cars have been in action already on Thursday in the two-hour IMSA Michelin Pilot Challenge race. The #43 Stephen Cameron Racing BMW M4 GT4 crossed the line in fifth position. Sean Quinlan and Gregory Liefoghe (both USA) shared duties in this car. Turner Motorsport finished ninth with the #95 BMW M4 GT4, driven by Auberlen and Dillon Machavern (USA). Their team-mates Foley and Vincent Barletta (USA) retired in the #96 car.

### Reactions after the Sebring 12 Hours:

**Andreas Roos (Head of BMW M Motorsport):** "After twelve exciting hours of racing we leave Sebring with mixed feelings. This race has once again



confirmed that endurance racing not only has highlights in store but can also bring setbacks and the final results have been disappointing, of course. Right up into the final phase it looked as if we could finish on the GTD PRO podium with our #24 and BMW M Team RLL. But a race isn't over until the chequered flag, and unfortunately a gearbox problem set us back a good hour before the end. The podium was clearly in the cards. I'm convinced that the number 25 would have fought for the rostrum as well if it hadn't been for the early problem with the power steering. It was important that we covered a lot of race kilometres with this car, too, to gather information. In the GTD class, Turner Motorsport also was on course for the podium until the very end but then dropped back. Paul Miller Racing also was among the favourites with the BMW M4 GT3. It's a shame that the team was denied a well-deserved top result through no fault of their own. Overall, our conclusion is that the pace and performance of all four cars were very good. Now it's time to analyse and fix the problems that have arisen."

**Marco Wittmann (BMW M Team RLL, #24 MOTUL BMW M4 GT3, 4th place GTD PRO):** "It's been a highlight for me to race on this famous track for the first time. It was a mega event and a lot of fun. We were fighting at the top with a competitive car all weekend. In the race, we were able to show our potential and fight for the lead with the Corvette. BMW M Motorsport, BMW M Team RLL and my fellow drivers did a great job and showed a very good performance. Unfortunately, we dropped back one hour before the end due to a technical problem. Although we missed the podium, we can take a lot of positives from this race. I'm sure the first podium will come soon."

**John Edwards (BMW M Team RLL, #25 MOTUL BMW M4 GT3, 10th place GTD PRO):** "Unfortunately we had a technical issue quite early in the race that cost us a lot of time. After that we took the race as a test session. It was important for Connor and myself to get a couple of hours in the car to learn as much as possible for the rest of the season. We are disappointed with our result but it was good to see that the car was competitive. That gives us confidence for the next race in Long Beach."



**Bill Auberlen (Turner Motorsport, #96 BMW M4 GT3, 4th place GTD):**

"The new BMW M4 GT3 ran perfectly over the twelve hours. We lead a lot of this race – didn't quite have the pace to win it, but stayed in second. Due to an error with the calculation of my maximum driving time we had to come to the pits. Otherwise we would have lost all our points. This one was much better than Daytona. Let's take this, take the points and move on to the next one."

**Bryan Sellers (Paul Miller Racing, #1 BMW M4 GT3, 16th place GTD):**

"We had a very good showing which was ended by someone else's mistake. We started very strong, taking the lead and were pretty much in control of the race with a 30-second gap to the second-placed car. The balance of the BMW M4 GT3 was very good and all drivers did similar lap times. Then we were taken out by another car. But still it was important to get the car fixed and bring it to the finish line. It was our first race with it and there is a lot to learn. So every lap of experience is extremely valuable."

**Media Contact.**

**Andrea Schwab**

Spokesperson BMW M

Phone: +49 (0) 151 601 60988

Email: [Andrea.Schwab@bmw.de](mailto:Andrea.Schwab@bmw.de)

**Thomas Plucinsky**

BMW Group Product Communications

Phone: +1 201 406 48 01

Email: [thomas.plucinsky@bmwna.com](mailto:thomas.plucinsky@bmwna.com)

**Bill Cobb**

BMW NA Motorsport Press Officer

Phone: +1 215 431 72 23

Email: [billcobbcommunications@yahoo.com](mailto:billcobbcommunications@yahoo.com)

**Media Website.**

<http://www.press.bmwgroup.com/global>

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