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Media Information

BMW Motorrad Motorsport

17th April 2022

A stone in the radiator: unfortunate retirement from the 24h Le Mans for the BMW Motorrad World Endurance Team.

- **Season-opener in the FIM Endurance World Championship 2022.**
- **BMW Motorrad World Endurance Team battling in the leading packing with the #37 BMW M 1000 RR in the early hours of the race.**
- **After four and a half hours, the team is forced to retire due to a stone lodged in the radiator.**

Le Mans. The 24 Hours of Le Mans (FRA), the season-opener in the FIM Endurance World Championship 2022, began according to plan for the BMW Motorrad World Endurance Team. Starting from fourth place, Jérémy Guarnoni (FRA), Markus Reiterberger (GER) and Ilya Mikhalchik (UKR) were battling in the leading pack during the early hours of the race, putting themselves in a good position for another podium finish in the FIM EWC. However, a stone lodged in the radiator was the cause of an unfortunate retirement after four and a half hours.

The BMW Motorrad World Endurance Team had already shown in practice and qualifying sessions that it remains one of the best teams in the FIM EWC this season. The pace with the race set-up was particularly promising and the team was brimming with optimism at the start of the 24-hour race on Saturday afternoon. Starting rider Guarnoni, Reiterberger and Mikhalchik kept the #37 BMW M 1000 RR consistently in the top four. The plan was to work their way gradually up through the field as the race progressed.

However, Guarnoni was forced to make an unexpected pit stop after four and a half hours. A stone had pierced the radiator and the subsequent overheating damaged the engine so severely that it was impossible to continue the race.

The team and riders are now fully focused on the second stop for the FIM EWC 2022, the 24 Hours of Spa-Francorchamps (BEL) on the first weekend in June.

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Reactions to the 24h Le Mans.

Marc Bongers, BMW Motorrad Motorsport Director: "Of course, that early retirement was hard for us to swallow. Another top result would have been more than deserved for the BMW Motorrad World Endurance Team. This confirmed that the hard work that we put in with the team over the winter had paid off. The overall package was fast, the racing pace was spot on and the fuel consumption, which is an important factor in endurance racing, was very efficient. The riders also gave a superb performance and the team worked superbly in the pits. It is extremely bad luck for a stone to hit the radiator and cause a chain reaction that ended the race for the #37. However, that can happen. Now we have to build on the many positive aspects and on what we learned from Le Mans. Preparations are underway for the next race. Spa will be a home race for the team and we would all like to convert the good performance into the result it deserves."

Werner Daemen, Team Manager BMW Motorrad World Endurance Team: "The race was good – until we had a big stone in our radiator. The water was straight out, the oil temperature went up and the engine broke. It was very disappointing for everybody that the race ended that way. For the riders, for the team, the mechanics, they all had worked so hard this winter to prepare the bike. We were very well prepared but this was something that nobody could foresee. We have a big protector in front of our radiator but this stone was at least two centimetres big and when it hits the radiator at 260 km/h then nothing helps. This happens, we are very disappointed but we will come back!"

Markus Reiterberger: "We started pretty well into the race and were able to constantly be within the top-four. We expected to benefit from our efficient fuel consumption after nine or ten hours and that our pace would improve even more during the cooler night stints but unfortunately we did not get that far. It of course is a bitter pill to swallow that a stone in the radiator ended our race early but no one could foresee this, this was just bad luck. It is a pity and we just take two points from qualifying away. But we don't give up, we still have two 24-hour races and at least one eight-hour race this season. I feel sorry for the entire team who had worked so hard over winter to give us the best possible package. It really would have deserved to get a top result."

Ilya Mikhalchik: "Overall, the race week was quite positive for us because we showed our speed over the entire week and the bike was particularly good for the race. For the first four and a half hours, we were fighting for the podium positions with a really good feeling. Unfortunately, we had bad luck and a stone decided to stop our race. But I already said last year after the Bol d'Or: we lose together and we win together. And afterwards, we

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have won at Most. So I am confident that more success is coming in the future. I am looking forward to getting back on this bike and fight again for top positions at my team's home race at Spa."

Jérémy Guarnoni: "We could not do anything; it was completely bad luck. But it can happen, that's endurance. I think that we did a good job, all three riders and the team. The bike was pretty good and we were waiting for the night to make a step forward. This unfortunately did not happen. Now we will focus on Spa, and I think at Spa, we have all chances to get to the podium. Thanks to the team and to my team-mates – see you at Spa!"

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