



Media Information
24h Spa-Francorchamps
31st July 2022

ROWE Racing so close to podium after strong Spa debut for the BMW M4 GT3.

- **ROWE Racing battles for podium spot with both BMW M4 GT3s before suffering tyre problems close to the finish.**
- **BMW Junior Team records great fifth place on Spa debut – team's second car in sixth position.**
- **Andreas Roos: "We showed what a great team we have - including our car."**

Spa-Francorchamps. Around two hours and just a bit of luck were all that was missing from an otherwise perfect debut for the BMW M4 GT3 at the 24 Hours of Spa-Francorchamps (BEL). Tyre damage to both ROWE Racing cars prevented a deserved podium finish after a superb, faultless performance. Making their Spa debut, the BMW Junior Team with Dan Harper (GBR), Max Hesse (GER) and Neil Verhagen (USA) chalked up an outstanding fifth place overall. In the #98 car, Nick Catsburg (NED), Augusto Farfus (BRA) and Nick Yelloly (GBR) battled for the lead for virtually the entire race before tyre damage put paid to their chances around 120 minutes before the finish. The trio crossed the line in sixth place.

Starting from 15th and 20th on the grid, both ROWE Racing crews worked their way gradually forwards with some calm, consistent and error-free driving. Some smart tactical decisions with pit-stops during full course yellows, saw the #98 BMW M4 GT3 involved in the battle for the lead during the first quarter of the race and Catsburg, Farfus and Yelloly were able to maintain that position as the race progressed. The intermediate ranking after six hours and the standings at the halfway point of the race had the trio in the lead. The BMW Junior Team was in second spot after twelve hours. Around two hours before the finish, Yelloly was safe in second place and even moved within striking distance of the leading Mercedes, only to lose a significant amount of time and fall back due to tyre damage. Final driver Catsburg was unable to improve on sixth place. Harper, the final driver for the BMW Junior Team, crossed the finish line



immediately ahead of him. Tyre damage had also cost him valuable seconds that robbed him of the chance to finish third. The BMW M4 GT3 nonetheless produced convincing speed and a high level of reliability. The drivers and teams also gave faultless performances.

In the Gold class, Walkenhorst Motorsport was in a good position for some time with the #34 BMW M4 GT3 and battled for a podium finish, however BMW M works driver Jens Klingmann (GER) and Michael Dinan, Robby Foley and Richard Heistand (all USA) then retired on Sunday morning. The #35 BMW M4 GT3, driven by team principal Henry Walkenhorst, Jörg Breuer, Theo Oeverhaus (all GER) and Don Yount (USA), finished second in the Bronze category. Samantha Tan Racing marked its debut with ninth place in the Silver category for Samantha Tan, Nick Wittmer (both CAN), Harry Gottsacker (USA) and Maxime Oosten (NED).

Reactions to the 24h Spa-Francorchamps:

Andreas Roos (Head of BMW M Motorsport): "Although it was a good race result with fifth and sixth places for the two ROWE Racing BMW M4 GT3s, I don't consider that it is a real reflection of our performance. The BMW M4 GT3 was very strong here and we were able to battle for the lead for the entire duration of the race. We were in first place after six hours, and after twelve hours we were first and second. The drivers didn't make any mistakes and the team worked perfectly. I am very grateful to everyone for that. We showed what a great team we have - including our car. Everyone at ROWE Racing and BMW M Motorsport can be very proud. Of course, we would like to finish off such a great performance over 24 hours by standing on the podium, holding a trophy. Unfortunately, double tyre damage put paid to that for us this time. That was simply bad luck. Hopefully, fortune will be on our side next time. Looking beyond the battle for the overall win, I was delighted to watch the BMW M Motorsport teams Walkenhorst Motorsport and Samantha Tan Racing as they were competing. They showed that the BMW M4 GT3 doesn't have to be in the hands of purely professional drivers to look good. That is exactly what we were aiming for when we developed this car."



Hans-Peter Naundorf (ROWE Racing Team Principal): "I am unbelievably proud of our team, as we delivered another outstanding performance here at Spa. Every single team member and everyone at BMW M Motorsport worked faultlessly for the entire weekend and provided impressive confirmation of our intention to always be battling for podium spots at the major 24-hour races. One damaged tyre on each car was all that prevented us from turning this aim into reality. Those were the only problems we had with our BMW M4 GT3 during the entire race weekend. They occurred at a very late stage and after that it was not possible to neutralise the race and we were unable to make up for lost time. That cost our crew in the #98 the chance of finishing second, and the BMW Junior Team could have finished third on its Spa debut without the tyre problems. In the end, we recorded two great finishes in fifth and sixth. This might feel like a disappointment initially, as we were extremely competitive and led the race for a long time. Congratulations to our drivers, they were very disciplined in extremely challenging conditions, followed all the instructions and did not receive one single penalty in 24 hours."

Dan Harper (#50 BMW M4 GT3, ROWE Racing, 5th place): "Our first appearance at the 24h Spa-Francorchamps went well. Fifth place is a good result, even though it is a bit painful to think that we could even have finished on the podium. None of us made any mistakes, and thanks to ROWE Racing and BMW M Motorsport we have once again learned a lot. I am simply grateful for the opportunity to participate in races at this extremely high level."

Nick Yelloly (#98 BMW M4 GT3, ROWE Racing, 6th place): "Our BMW M4 GT3 was very competitive for the whole weekend. We would definitely have made it to the podium if the tyre gods had just been on our side at the end. That's just how it is at this race. If you still reach the top six despite this bad luck, you've done a good job. Many thanks to everyone – including everybody in the background, who made some very good strategic decisions. We'll get that podium next time."

BMW

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