



Media Information
BMW M Motorsport
4th June 2023

GT World Challenge Europe: third place for ROWE Racing at the 1000km race of Paul Ricard.

- **After opening the season with victory in Monza, Philipp Eng, Marco Wittmann and Nick Yelloly collected the third-place trophies, having earlier crossed the line in fourth in the second endurance race.**
- **A great race from the BMW Junior Team, moving up ten places to finish in sixth position.**
- **Bad luck for the BMW M Team WRT: #32 BMW M4 GT3 retires after a collision, with the #46 BMW M4 GT3 in eighth place after a strong, chasing performance.**

Le Castellet. Second race, second podium for ROWE Racing. In the second Endurance Cup race in the Fanatec GT World Challenge Europe Powered by AWS (GTWC), the 1000km of Paul Ricard (FRA), BMW M works drivers Philipp Eng (AUT), Marco Wittmann (GER) and Nick Yelloly (GBR) followed up their opening-day win in Monza (ITA) by claiming third place and maintaining their lead in the standings. The trio was again in the lead until darkness fell, but final stint driver Yelloly didn't have the pace in the car required to defend that position. The BMW Junior Team crossed the line in sixth in the team's second car, with Valentino Rossi (ITA), Maxime Martin (BEL) and Augusto Farfus (BRA) finishing eighth for the BMW M Team WRT after a strong chasing performance.

In general, every BMW M4 GT3 delivered a much-improved race performance in southern France, compared with their qualifying results. The #98 car came from 11th on the grid and starting driver Wittmann was able to move up to fourth in his two stints. Eng took over and swiftly progressed to second place. When the leading Audi was forced to retire with tyre problems, Eng was in the lead. Only in the final third of the race the trio was pushed back somewhat. Having finished fourth, they were then classified third when a five-second penalty was imposed on the Audi ahead of them.





Starting in 16th, BMW M works drivers and BMW Junior Team members Dan Harper (GBR), Max Hesse (GER) and Neil Verhagen (USA) improved by ten places, while the #46 BMW M4 GT3 from the BMW M Team WRT did even better, moving up 12 positions from 20th to eighth. Rossi had opened the race with a double stint, followed by Farfus and then Martin.

After qualifying, the #32 BMW M4 GT3 from the BMW M Team WRT was the best-placed car in ninth. Starting driver Charles Weerts (BEL) progressed by several positions in the first stint and was fifth when he was overtaken by Wittmann, and then collided with a Ferrari. Unfortunately, as a result of the contact Weerts was not able to steer and was consequently forced to retire; his team-mates Sheldon van der Linde (RSA) and Dries Vanthoor (BEL) never got the chance to get behind the wheel. Technical issues also prevented the #30 BMW M4 GT3 of the WRT team and the #35 BMW M4 GT3 from Walkenhorst Motorsport from reaching the finish. The #31 BMW M4 GT3 from the WRT team finished fifth in the Bronze category.

Reactions after the race.

Philipp Eng (#98 BMW M4 GT3, ROWE Racing, 3rd place): "We finished the practice sessions on Friday quite a long way off the lead, but our team did a fantastic job overnight. I think our race engineer was glad when we drivers finally went home Friday evening, as we were getting on his nerves a bit! But it was worth it. Together, we made some significant improvements to the car, and as a result we did well in qualifying. The race was so much fun, my battles with the Mercedes were pretty cool and very fair. Starting from eleventh we had not expected to reach first place, but we need to analyse why we had problems with our pace towards the end. However, we scored some important points by finishing third and have defended our lead in the championship as we approach the biggest race of the year in the series and head to Spa-Francorchamps."

Max Hesse (#998 BMW M4 GT3, ROWE Racing, 6th place): "We can be very satisfied with the race. We were extremely competitive, particularly when the conditions cooled down from the third stint onwards, and the team did a superb job. However, we need to look at why we weren't on the pace in qualifying and therefore why we were unable to get a better grid position. That cost us a lot of time in the opening phase of the race."



Valentino Rossi (#46 BMW M4 GT3, BMW M Team WRT, 8th place): "Our race was OK. Of course, we want more, but finishing eighth from 20th on the grid is a good result. Our pace in the race was respectable and we made it to the finish line without any problems. This was important preparation for the 24 Hours of Spa-Francorchamps."

Charles Weerts (#32 BMW M4 GT3, BMW M Team WRT, DNF): "The incident was unfortunate. Our two cars were side-by-side, I tried to cut back, and we touched slightly. It wasn't a big hit but was obviously just at the wrong spot as the steering didn't work anymore. It's a real shame as we had a good chance to achieve a strong result here. But it is like it is. We now focus on the next race in Spa."

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