



Media Information  
BMW M Motorsport  
18th February 2024

## **Bathurst 12 Hour: BMW M Team WRT narrowly misses the podium in a turbulent race.**

- **Valentino Rossi, Maxime Martin, and Raffaele Marciello finished in fifth place in the #46 BMW M4 GT3.**
- **Pole position, yet unfortunate retirement from the race for Sheldon van der Linde, Dries Vanthoor, and Charles Weerts in the #32 car.**
- **Raffaele Marciello: "We would have been able to get a better result but we made a few mistakes".**

**Bathurst. BMW M Team WRT showed strong speed at the season opener of the Intercontinental GT Challenge (IGTC) at the Mount Panorama Circuit in Bathurst (AUS), but was unable to reap the rewards in a race marked by incidents and changeable weather. Sheldon van der Linde (RSA), Charles Weerts, and Dries Vanthoor (BEL) started the 12-hour race from pole position in the #32 BMW M4 GT3 but were forced to retire after an accident. In the #46 BMW M4 GT3, Valentino Rossi (ITA), Maxime Martin (BEL), and Raffaele Marciello (SUI) fought for a podium spot in an exciting final stage up to the last lap but ultimately had to settle for fifth place.**

Throughout the race the BMW XM Safety Car repeatedly led the field after accidents, for the last time about 40 minutes before the end. That ignited a fierce battle for the podium places in which Martin briefly moved into third place with a bold overtaking manoeuvre, but had to relinquish it immediately due to a slight braking error on the still-slippery track. Thunderstorms with heavy rain showers characterised the second half of the race. Only in the last hour did the asphalt dry up again.

For the sister #32 car, the weekend had started perfectly. On Saturday, van der Linde secured pole position for the #32 BMW M4 GT3 in the Top-10 Pole Shootout, giving the team reason to celebrate. Martin qualified the car #46 in eighth place.



The race started on Sunday morning at 5:45 a.m. local time in darkness. Car #32 maintained the lead in the early stages, while #46 continued to move forward. It wasn't long before both BMW M4 GT3s were in the top three. However, after nearly five hours of racing, there was a moment of shock for BMW M Team WRT when the #32 car crashed heavily into the wall after unfortunate contact with a lapped car. Weerts, who was driving at the time, was fortunately uninjured, but for him and his teammates van der Linde and Vanthoor, the race was over prematurely.

Meanwhile, the #46 car, lying in second place, continued to fight for the lead. In the second half of the race, the weather repeatedly caused turbulent scenes on the track and shuffled the field several times. In addition, the #46 BMW M4 GT3 temporarily fell out of the top ten after a drive-through penalty for crossing the white line at the pit stop but was able to quickly regain positions and stay in the leading group until the end.

#### **Quotes after the Bathurst 12 Hour.**

**Vincent Vosse (Team Principal BMW M Team WRT):** "We started with a pole position, which was a good thing. Of course, it is a difficult one to swallow because we had two strong cars. There were some mistakes; it is a difficult race on a difficult track. Finishing fifth is of course not what we are looking for, especially as at one stage, ten minutes from the end, we were fighting for P2. It's a very tough race and a very tough championship. There are some strong cars out there. Now we need to analyse where we lost it. This is not a race that you win but one that you lose. And that is what happened."

**Valentino Rossi (#46 BMW M4 GT3, 5th place):** "We tried to fight for the podium until the end. That was the target. I think that we deserved a bit more. For sure, it has been very difficult with the rain and it was a shame that it rained as I could not do my third run, but on the other hand, in two and a half hours in the car I was good, I was quite fast, my pace was good and I could fight with the other top drivers. We suffered a bit too much in the wet. I think that we need to improve the car in these conditions. We had the pace in the dry and it was strange to have this weather."



**Raffaele Marciello (#46 BMW M4 GT3, 5th place):** "It was a tough race. In the second half of the race it was quite wet and it really was not easy, but when the conditions improved it was a bit better. I think that we would have been able to get a better result but we made a few mistakes and lost a bit too much time. It is unfortunate but it is still good points and we will do better in the next one."

**Maxime Martin (#46 BMW M4 GT3, 5th place):** "At the end, we had an okay race I would say. We had some issues, some offs, some penalties, a lot of things were happening. The conditions were difficult with the wet and the dry and a drying track but we had nice 40 minutes at the end fighting. I had one possibility to pass; I had to try and I went a bit wide, got passed and we finished in P5. It's a bit of a shame and frustrating but I think with the speed of the Porsche we couldn't win the race anyway. But we finished another race, we learnt again and I hope that we will come back even stronger next year."

**Sheldon van der Linde (#32 BMW M4 GT3, DNF):** "Obviously, it was a highlight for me to be on pole at Bathurst. That was something I wanted to achieve for a long time in my career. Of course it does not mean much for the race but it is such a nice time to be on track alone without the traffic. I really enjoyed attacking for one lap. Unfortunately in the race, we had the accident which can happen to a lot of people so that's nothing we can change now. I just hope that the season gets better from now. Last year, we had a lot of bad luck as well and we did not want to carry it into this year but I am sure it will turn around in the next races."

**Charles Weerts (#32 BMW M4 GT3, DNF):** "Bathurst was the first race weekend of the year for me and I was looking forward to be here a lot. It is an extraordinary venue. The weekend started off pretty well. The car was in a good window and we had a good performance in the package that BMW M Motorsport and BMW M Team WRT gave us so expectations were high. Sheldon then did a great lap in qualifying to bring the car on pole which was great. At the start of the race, everything went according to plan, we were always in the mix to fight for the lead. Then I unfortunately had this contact with a backmarker. It was quite unlucky to get that traffic at that exact spot. Looking back now for sure I would have waited a bit longer, but at the end of the day we are racers and if we see a gap we go for it. It was very unfortunate for our car and I feel sorry for my teammates, my team, BMW M Motorsport and also for



myself because that was not the goal after the everybody's great work. This only fuels our motivation more for the rest of the season and I can't wait to go back racing again."

**Dries Vanthoor (#32 BMW M4 GT3, DNF):** "It was a bit of a pity how the race ended but we had a great build up to the race. Sheldon did a great job in qualifying but we also made a great team effort, working together very well to get the car where we wanted to have it in qualifying and also during the race. Unfortunately, the race was a bit short for us but at the end that is part of racing. The most important thing is that Charles is okay."

### Media Contact.

#### Andrea Schwab

Spokesperson BMW M

Phone: +49 (0) 151 601 60988

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

#### Martin Schleypen

Spokesperson BMW M

Phone: +49 (0) 151 601 37889

E-mail: [Martin.Schleypen@bmwgroup.com](mailto:Martin.Schleypen@bmwgroup.com)

### Media Website.

[www.press.bmwgroup.com/global](http://www.press.bmwgroup.com/global)

### BMW M Motorsport on the Web.

Website: [www.bmw-motorsport.com](http://www.bmw-motorsport.com)

Facebook: [www.facebook.com/bmwmotorsport](https://www.facebook.com/bmwmotorsport)

Instagram: [www.instagram.com/bmwmotorsport](https://www.instagram.com/bmwmotorsport)

Twitter: [www.twitter.com/bmwmotorsport](https://www.twitter.com/bmwmotorsport)