



Media Information
BMW M Motorsport
30th June 2024

24h Spa-Francorchamps: BMW M Team WRT reaches the podium at the anniversary of their home race.

- **After a turbulent 24 hours, Sheldon van der Linde, Dries Vanthoor, and Charles Weerts finish in third place at Spa-Francorchamps.**
- **Three BMW M4 GT3s battle for victory in difficult weather conditions with heavy rain at night until the closing stage.**
- **A slow puncture shortly before the end of the race costs the ROWE Racing #998 BMW M4 GT3 second place on the podium.**
- **Video statements of Andreas Roos, Vincent Vosse, Hans-Peter Naundorf, Dries Vanthoor and Sheldon van der Linde:**
https://b.mw/24h_Spa_Interviews.

Spa-Francorchamps. BMW M Motorsport reached the podium with the BMW M4 GT3 at all three major 24-hour races in June. Following third place at the Nürburgring (GER) and second at Le Mans (FRA), the 24 Hours of Spa-Francorchamps (BEL) saw Sheldon van der Linde (RSA), Dries Vanthoor, and Charles Weerts (both BEL) finish in third place. The trio secured the first BMW M Team WRT podium at their home race together with BMW M Motorsport. The ROWE Racing #998 BMW M4 GT3 was in second position until just before the end but fell back to sixth place due to a late additional pit stop.

During the 24-hour race, which began in warmth and sunshine but had to be neutralised for several hours behind the safety car at night due to heavy rain showers, the #998 BMW M4 GT3 was strong. Augusto Farfus (BRA), Dan Harper (GBR), and Max Hesse (GER) led the race despite a drive-through penalty during the night and fought for the win, however a slow puncture forced the ROWE Racing team to bring forward the last planned pit stop. Since the final driver Hesse would have exceeded the maximum allowed duration of a stint by about a minute, he had to enter the pit lane shortly before the finish, dropping from second to sixth place.





The #32 crew moved from 23rd on the grid to the front with strong driving and good strategy amid the numerous difficult tyre choices. In the final sprint, van der Linde, Vanthoor, and Weerts were in fifth place, but after the #998 pit stop and a time penalty for a competitor the trio was able to secure third place. It was the first podium for BMW M Team WRT at their home race in Belgium with the BMW M4 GT3 – and that at the 100th anniversary of the Ardennes endurance classic.

The #46 BMW M4 GT3 was also in contention for the podium for a long time, but an accident involving Valentino Rossi (ITA), combined with a repair break and a penalty, pushed him and his teammates Raffaele Marciello (SUI) and Maxime Martin (BEL) back to 24th place. The second ROWE Racing car of the defending champions Philipp Eng (AUT), Marco Wittmann (GER), and Nick Yelloly (GBR) retired after about three hours with a technical defect in the cooling system.

In the Bronze category, Connor De Phillippi (USA), Pedro Ebrahim (BRA), Darren Leung (GBR), and Toby Sowery (GBR) in the #991 BMW M4 GT3 from Century Motorsport crossed the finish line in ninth place after a challenging weekend. The #30 BMW M4 GT3 from Team WRT with Ahmad Al Harthy (OMA), Sam De Haan (GBR), Jens Klingmann (GER), and Calan Williams (AUS) at the wheel was doing well and in bronze podium contention but retired due to a technical issue, which has to be evaluated later.

Video statements of Andreas Roos, Vincent Vosse, Hans-Peter Naundorf, Dries Vanthoor and Sheldon van der Linde: https://b.mw/24h_Spa_Interviews.

Comments after the 24h Spa-Francorchamps:

Andreas Roos (Head of BMW M Motorsport): "You can summarise the weekend as a rollercoaster ride. Qualifying did not go ideally for us, and we went into the race with that burden. However, we were able to work our way to the front with a very good performance from the teams and drivers, at times having three cars in the lead. Under the very difficult conditions in the race, the teams often made the right decisions, and the drivers kept the cars almost flawlessly on track. That was the foundation for us to compete for a good result. It was a pity for car #46, which had an accident, resulting in a repair and a



penalty. That was very annoying because they were also doing very well. In the end, it wasn't enough for the top spot. But to be on the podium again after last year's victory is great for us. ROWE Racing unfortunately had to come in earlier for tyre damage for the last planned pit stop. Therefore, the stint time according to the regulations was too long, and the car had to come in again for a short stop at the end. As a result, they lost a very good second place. That's how it is, unfortunately. Nevertheless, we are happy for the #32, which has achieved another good result with third place. I thank all drivers, teams, and BMW M Motorsport team members for their commitment during this extremely intense time with three 24-hour races in five weeks, where we managed to reach the podium each time."

Hans-Peter Naundorf (Team Principal ROWE Racing): "This race was an unbelievable emotional rollercoaster that demanded everything from the team and the drivers. We put on a great show and demonstrated our capability, even if we were not rewarded for it in the end. Congratulations to BMW M Team WRT on their podium finish at their home race. All BMW vehicles did a splendid job and represented the brand with honour. At times, three BMWs were in the top-four of this extraordinary race. For us, it was very bitter to lose a hard-fought, seemingly tangible, and deserved podium in the end due to a slow puncture that happened just one lap too early. After the early retirement of our title defenders in the #98 BMW M4 GT3 due to a technical defect, which we still need to investigate more closely, and two setbacks for the sister car, the crew of the #998 BMW M4 GT3 impressively fought their way back to the front during the night and early morning hours under sometimes adverse weather conditions. Our team was a fantastic unit and functioned superbly; otherwise, such a performance would not have been possible. We can be proud of that and try to take the positive aspects with us, despite the initial great disappointment, to give our best again next time."

Vincent Vosse (Team Principal BMW M Team WRT): "Just finishing a 24-hour race is always something special. The way we all fought for this podium was an incredible job by the mechanics, engineers, and drivers. They performed brilliantly. Like everyone, we had better and worse times during the race. But to be on the podium at the end is a special feeling."





Dries Vanthoor (#32 BMW M4 GT3, BMW M Team WRT, 3rd place): "It was a tough race for us. We weren't the fastest, but we drove a clean race and made few mistakes. We can be very happy about that. Unfortunately, the #998 had a puncture, which brought us back into the fight for the podium. In the end, I gave it my all. Nothing more was possible. I'm glad to be on the podium – especially after the tough month with the races at the Nürburgring and Le Mans. It's a well-deserved third place for our team."

Sheldon van der Linde (#32 BMW M4 GT3, BMW M Team WRT, 3rd place): "I'm very happy about the unexpected podium at the end. We were in fourth and fifth place in the last hour and didn't expect to make it to the podium. Unfortunately, the ROWE Racing car had a small problem at the end which is why we slipped onto the podium. But we drove a very clean race. I'm very happy that we're back on track for success. The past two years have been very difficult for our car with retirements and some problems. But I'm glad we made it to the podium. We're on the leaderboard in the championship, which is important for the rest of the year. I'm happy for the whole team because they've worked very hard over the past two years. They deserve it."

Charles Weerts (#32 BMW M4 GT3, BMW M Team WRT, 3rd place): "It was a very special and difficult weekend for us. In terms of performance, we had some problems compared to the other manufacturers but we worked very hard with the team and BMW M Motorsport to optimise the package we had. We drove an almost perfect race. It was very difficult to get to the podium here, but we made it, and I'm very happy about that. I feel sorry for the #998. They drove a great race and deserved a podium as well."

Augusto Farfus (#998 BMW M4 GT3, ROWE Racing, 6th place): "This is a bitter pill. It was a tough race, but we executed it well. In the end, we were on course for the podium but suffered a puncture 64 minutes before the end. If it had come one lap later, we would have made it to the end. Due to the regulations, we had to make another pit stop. Sometimes this sport can be brutal."

Valentino Rossi (#46 BMW M4 GT3, BMW M Team WRT, 24th place): "It's a big shame because we had a very good race and we were there to fight for the victory, for the podium. We enjoyed it a lot even though the race was in very





difficult conditions. We were fast and competitive, but unfortunately at the end of my stint, after the restart, I touched with another car, went into the dirt and then there was damage to the car when I rejoined the track. It's a great shame for all of the team, for Maxime and Lello. We will try to win the next one."

Philipp Eng (#98 BMW M4 GT3, ROWE Racing, DNF): "Unfortunately, our title defense did not go well for us. In the early stages, we always lost some time during the pit stops. Then I had to swerve into the gravel to avoid an accident in front of me. It continued normally and without any signs of a problem, but a few laps later I got a water pressure alarm. We found that the cooling system had damage, but it certainly had nothing to do with my excursion. Exactly what happened, we still need to clarify. All in all, we would have wished for a nicer return to the site of our victory a year ago."

Jens Klingmann (#30 BMW M4 GT4, Team WRT, DNF): "Generally, it was a difficult weekend for everyone with the conditions. Especially at night with the onset of rain, partly heavy rain, and then the drying track, it was hard to have the right tyres at the right time. All in all, we did a good job. We got through the night without a scratch. That was the big goal, to then attack on Sunday. Unfortunately, we then had a technical problem, which is why we had to retire the car early. But in terms of pace, especially in the rain, we were right there, which is encouraging and gives us hope for the upcoming races. It's a shame we couldn't bring it home for the team. We didn't achieve our big goal of getting to the bronze podium, but we can still be proud. We drove an almost flawless race until the retirement. Sometimes a bit of luck is part of it, and that's what we lacked today."

Connor De Phillippi (#991 BMW M4 GT3, Century Motorsport, 9th place Bronze class): "I love this race. It's one of the big 24-hour races that you just want to drive. It's very nice to come back here, for the first time with BMW M Motorsport. It was a great week with the guys, we had a lot of fun. The team had to fight against a lot of adversity. Just getting the car to the grid on time was a hurdle. But we all kept a great team spirit, everyone worked incredibly professionally. It was obviously not the result we wanted but we had a good time, finished the race after technical problems before the start without further difficulties – and hopefully, we'll be back next year."



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