



Media Information  
BMW M Motorsport  
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**BMW M Racing Academy: "Class of 2026" starts with three customer racing drivers from three continents.**

- The BMW M Racing Academy, BMW M Motorsport's support programme for customer racing, is entering its second season.
- Three drivers from three continents make up the "Class of 2026": German Thomas Rackl, American Josh Green and Australian Ryder Quinn.
- BMW M works drivers Jens Klingmann, Max Hesse and Robby Foley accompany the programme as mentors.
- Björn Lellmann: "Our 'Class of 2026' has the unique opportunity to spend a year gaining insights into the work of BMW M Motorsport that can help them make significant progress."

**Munich. BMW M Motorsport's support programme for customer racing enters its second round in 2026. In an intensive selection process held in Munich (GER), twelve candidates from ten nations applied for a spot in the "Class of 2026" of the BMW M Racing Academy. Ultimately, BMW M Motorsport officials selected three drivers who will benefit from an exclusive programme next year: German Thomas Rackl, American Josh Green, and Australian Ryder Quinn.**

Following the successful completion of the "Class of 2025," which included Berkay Besler (TUR), Nerea Martí (ESP), Matt Million (USA), and Niels Tröger (GER), the two-day screening of candidates for the second season of the BMW M Racing Academy took place at the end of October. Twelve young talents, aiming to drive the BMW M4 GT4 in the upcoming customer racing season, were selected from a large pool of applicants to face various challenges in Munich under the watchful eyes of BMW M Motorsport officials. They underwent practical driving contests in BMW M models guided by the BMW M Driving Experience, mental and fitness tests conducted by Formula Medicine experts, an Esports challenge on the racing simulator, as well as driver and media interviews.



The candidates' performances were observed and evaluated not only by experts from the respective fields but also by the three mentors of the BMW M Racing Academy – BMW M works drivers Jens Klingmann, Max Hesse (both GER), and Robby Foley (USA). This trio had already served as advisors during the "Class of 2025," providing valuable insights into the work of professional racing drivers. Klingmann, Hesse, and Foley will intensify their roles in 2026.

Three drivers from three continents were selected for the "Class of 2026." Representing Germany is Thomas Rackl. The 17-year-old competed for the ME Motorsport Team in the ADAC GT4 Germany over the past two seasons. In 2025, he finished seventh overall and fifth in the junior standings in the BMW M4 GT4 EVO alongside Linus Hahne (GER). In 2023, he secured second place in the German Kart Championship.

From the USA, Josh Green joins the programme. The 23-year-old excelled in his first full GT season in 2025, driving the BMW M4 GT4 EVO for Random Vandals Racing in GT4 America. Partnering with Sam Craven (USA), he claimed the Pro-Am category title with five wins and nine podium finishes.

Ryder Quinn is the first Australian member of the BMW M Racing Academy. The 20-year-old competed in the GT4 Australia in 2025 with the BMW M4 GT4, finishing fourth overall in the Silver-Am category alongside Steve Jakic (AUS). The duo achieved one victory. In 2023, Quinn was a Michelin Junior in the Australian Porsche Carrera Cup, and in 2021, he became the Formula Ford Champion.

The programme for the BMW M Racing Academy "Class of 2026" will be announced at a later date.

#### **Comments on the "Class of 2026".**

**Björn Lellmann (Head of Customer Racing at BMW M Motorsport):** "We are entering our second season with the BMW M Racing Academy, and I am very proud of the programme we launched in 2025. The focus is clearly on the academy concept. Our 'Class of 2026' now has the unique opportunity to spend a year gaining insights into the work of BMW M Motorsport, which can



significantly advance their own racing careers. Our three BMW M works drivers Jens Klingmann, Max Hesse, and Robby Foley are perfectly suited as mentors with their open-minded approach. The participants can learn an incredible amount from them. I am very much looking forward to the coming year."

**Jens Klingmann (Mentor BMW M Racing Academy):** "All twelve candidates who participated in the selection process can be proud of their achievements. They all have what it takes to build a successful career in motorsport. I am very excited to work with Josh, Ryder, and Thomas in 2026. As the name 'Academy' suggests, we will coach the three in many areas – driving, mental and physical training, writing reports, media work – in all aspects that will help them progress as racing drivers. We mentors are there for them, always accessible and ready to share our knowledge and experience. Our goal is to improve their foundation, enabling them to take the next steps in their careers."

**Max Hesse (Mentor BMW M Racing Academy):** "The selection days were very exciting. We had twelve very strong candidates in Munich, which says a lot about the high level of our GT4 programme. As a member of the BMW Junior Team, I can relate very well to the 'Class of 2026' and am closest to them in age. Alongside Jens, with his vast experience not only as a driver but also as a developer of racing cars, and Robby, with his customer racing and Esports background – I think we mentors complement each other perfectly."

**Robby Foley (Mentor BMW M Racing Academy):** "We presented our candidates with many different challenges during the selection process. All twelve were very mature for their age and impressed us. Even though only three made it into the 'Class of 2026,' I believe all of them have the potential for a great career in motorsport. I saw parts of myself in them. I also come from customer racing, so it is an honour for me to support them as a mentor with my experiences."

**Josh Green:** "Being part of the BMW M Racing Academy is a big step in the right direction for my career as a racing driver. Everyone entering sports car racing dreams of being associated with a manufacturer – and especially one with as much tradition and history as BMW M Motorsport. From the 'Class of 2026,' I hope to improve in terms of car dynamics and development, areas that



interest me greatly. Additionally, I hope to make and deepen many connections."

**Ryder Quinn:** "It was very special to experience during the selection days what a major manufacturer like BMW M Motorsport has to offer. Now being part of the 'Class of 2026' is a great honour. I always wanted to represent a manufacturer, and in a way, I am now doing that for customer racing in Australia. I am very excited to absorb as much as possible from what BMW M Motorsport offers me. Above all, the close contact with the mentors will be very valuable for me. This opportunity is fantastic."

**Thomas Rackl:** "Just being one of the selected candidates for the assessment centre was already a great honour for me. Now being one of only three participants worldwide in the 'Class of 2026' is absolutely amazing. Our mentors are great guys, not just in terms of their sporting achievements but also as people. I expect a lot from working with them. I am sure I can learn an incredible amount from them and am really looking forward to it."

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