



Media Information
BMW M Motorsport
18th January 2026

'Roar Before the 24': BMW M Motorsport teams prepare for the first highlight of the 2026 season.

- **BMW M Team WRT gains valuable experience with both BMW M Hybrid V8s for the race premiere in the IMSA GTP class.**
- **First appearance of the further developed BMW M Hybrid V8 in the iconic BMW M Motorsport Inception design.**
- **Paul Miller Racing and Turner Motorsport push for success in the GTD classes with the BMW M4 GT3 EVO.**

Daytona. The countdown to the first highlight of the motorsport season began this weekend with the 'Roar Before the 24': the 24 Hours of Daytona (USA). In six test sessions, BMW M Team WRT completed around 450 laps of the Daytona International Speedway with the two BMW M Hybrid V8s, collecting valuable data in the process. The Belgian crew will celebrate their race debut in the GTP class next weekend at the season opener of the IMSA WeatherTech SportsCar Championship (IMSA Series). The cars made their first IMSA appearance in the iconic BMW M Motorsport Inception design at the Roar.

After intensive months of preparation for the BMW M Hybrid V8 in the IMSA Series, BMW M Team WRT had three equally busy days of testing in Florida. For the aerodynamically revised version of the car, every kilometer counts in the run-up to the first major 24-hour endurance challenge. The data obtained will be analysed over the next few days in order to be optimally prepared for the upcoming race weekend.

In the GTD PRO category, Paul Miller Racing completed around 180 test laps with the #1 BMW M4 GT3 EVO, while Turner Motorsport completed almost the same distance in the GTD class with the #96 BMW M4 GT3 EVO.

Practice for the 24 Hours of Daytona begins on Thursday at 10:05 local time (16:05 CET), with the race starting on Saturday at 13:40 local time (19:40 CET).



The BMW M Endurance Challenge is already on the programme on Friday (13:45 local time, 19:45 CET). Nine BMW M4 GT4 EVOs will be on the grid for the 4-hour race at the season opener of the IMSA Michelin Pilot Challenge.

Drivers' comments after the 'Roar Before the 24:

Sheldon van der Linde (#24 BMW M Hybrid V8, BMW M Team WRT, GTP):

"We've spent the past few days working through the initial adjustments as new team members joined, setting a strong foundation moving forward. In the practice sessions before the race, the focus will now be on performance, so that we have a fast car in the race, which we can hopefully fight for victory with. I'm really looking forward to getting started. We have a very strong line-up in the number 24."

René Rast (#24 BMW M Hybrid V8, BMW M Team WRT, GTP): "Of course, with so many new people in the team and in a new racing series for WRT, it takes some time for everything to run perfectly. But my impression after the Roar is positive. Everything worked well and we were able to complete all the test sessions without any technical problems. At the moment, we are still lacking a bit of performance, so we need to make good use of the practice sessions next week to improve the balance of the car."

Marco Wittmann (#25 BMW M Hybrid V8, BMW M Team WRT, GTP): "The Roar was particularly important in order to coordinate all the processes within the new team. My impression of the atmosphere within the crew is very positive. Of course, we also worked very hard to get the car into a good set-up window for the race, which we can hopefully utilise to achieve a strong result. We are all very excited about the coming week."

Kevin Magnussen (#25 BMW M Hybrid V8, BMW M Team WRT, GTP): "We are not yet where we need to be with the balance of the car if we want to fight for victory next weekend. But I am confident that after studying the data from the Roar, we can make significant steps forward in the remaining practice sessions. The mood in the team is good. Everyone is highly motivated to send a competitive package into the race."



Neil Verhagen (#1 BMW M4 GT3 EVO, Paul Miller Racing, GTD PRO):

"Everything went according to plan for us at the Roar. The car didn't cause any problems and the team is also working very well. I'm really looking forward to driving with my BMW Junior colleagues Max and Dan again, and to be able to contest the whole season with Connor is great. Now we have a short break, then we can start again on Thursday!"

Jens Klingmann (#96 BMW M4 GT3 EVO, Turner Motorsport, GTD): "That was a very positive test for us. As always, we just concentrated on ourselves and our preparation for the race. Lap times didn't matter at all. The car is reliable and we were able to complete our programme as planned. We won't know exactly where we stand until things get serious next week. I am confident that we are well prepared for the season opener."

The IMSA line-ups for 2026 at a glance:

GTP:

#24 BMW M Hybrid V8, BMW M Team WRT:

Sheldon van der Linde (RSA)
Dries Vanthoor (BEL)
Robin Frijns (NED), Endurance
René Rast (GER), 24h Daytona

#25 BMW M Hybrid V8, BMW M Team WRT:

Philipp Eng (AUT)
Marco Wittmann (GER)
Kevin Magnussen (DEN), Endurance
Raffaele Marciello (SUI), 24h Daytona

GTD-PRO:

#1 BMW M4 GT3 EVO, Paul Miller Racing:

Connor De Phillippi (USA)
Neil Verhagen (USA)
Max Hesse (GER), Endurance
Dan Harper (GBR), 24h Daytona



GTD:

#96 BMW M4 GT3 EVO, Turner Motorsport:

Robby Foley (USA)

Patrick Gallagher (USA)

Francis Selldorff (USA), Endurance

Jens Klingmann (GER), 24h Daytona

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