



Media Information  
BMW M Motorsport  
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## **GT World Challenge Europe: Podium for the defending champions at Brands Hatch.**

- **Charles Weerts and Kelvin van der Linde claim third place in the first Sprint race with the Team WRT #32 BMW M4 GT3 EVO.**
- **Victory and podium finish for the team's #30 BMW M4 GT3 EVO in the Silver Cup.**
- **Tributes to the late Alessandro Zanardi at Brands Hatch.**

**Brands Hatch. With the opening two races at Britain's Brands Hatch circuit, the Sprint Cup season of the GT World Challenge Europe powered by AWS has now begun. Defending champions Charles Weerts (BEL) and Kelvin van der Linde (RSA) started the new season of the championship with a podium finish: they were placed third in the first of Sunday's two races in the Team WRT #32 BMW M4 GT3 EVO. The team also had reason to celebrate in the Silver Cup, with a victory and a third-place finish in class for Matisse Lismont (BEL) and Ignacio Montenegro (ARG) in the #30 BMW M4 GT3 EVO.**

Weerts and van der Linde, who won both the overall title and the Sprint Cup title in the GT World Challenge Europe powered by AWS last season, produced strong comeback drives after difficult qualifying sessions in both races. In race one on Sunday morning, they fought their way up to fourth place. However, after several drive-through penalties were issued after the race for yellow-flag infringements, they were promoted to third and onto the podium. In the second race, their charge through the field brought them up to sixth place.

Max Hesse (GER) and Valentino Rossi (ITA) also impressed in the Team WRT #46 BMW M4 GT3 EVO. With eighth place (Rossi) and third place (Hesse), they were the fastest BMW drivers in each of the two qualifying sessions. In the first race, they fought their way up to fifth place but were among the crews penalised after the race, leaving them classified 16th. In race two, Hesse and Rossi narrowly missed out on the podium in fourth place. In the third PRO Cup entry from Team WRT, the #31 BMW M4 GT3 EVO, Jordan Pepper (RSA)



shared driving duties with Amaury Cordeel (BEL). They finished a strong fourth in the first race and crossed the line seventh in race two.

In the #30 BMW M4 GT3 EVO, Lismont and Montenegro won both Silver Cup qualifying sessions. Starting from pole position, they also crossed the finish line first in class in both races. In the opening race, a post-race penalty dropped them to third place, while in the second race they kept the victory. A fifth BMW M4 GT3 EVO was entered at Brands Hatch by KPX Motorsport. Driving car number 77, Jop Rappange (NED) and David Pittard (GBR) finished sixth and fourth in the Gold Cup.

### **Remembering Alessandro Zanardi.**

The weekend at Brands Hatch began for BMW M Motorsport and the entire racing family with the very sad news that Alessandro Zanardi (ITA) had passed away at the age of 59. Tributes at Brands Hatch honoured the life of the long-time BMW works driver and corporate ambassador. It was at this circuit that he won two of his Paralympic gold medals in 2012. Zanardi also competed in the former Blancpain GT Series with the BMW Z4 GT3, the championship that later evolved into today's GT World Challenge Europe powered by AWS.

All four BMW M4 GT3 EVO cars entered by Team WRT carried the message: "Grazie, Alex. Our Hero – R.I.P." A moment of silence was held on the grid before the first race, and a video featuring Zanardi at Brands Hatch paid tribute to the remarkable man and athlete.

### **Reactions after the races at Brands Hatch:**

**Charles Weerts (#32 BMW M4 GT3 EVO, Team WRT, Race 1: 3rd place, Race 2: 6th place):** "Overall, it was a pretty positive race weekend, although we made life significantly harder for ourselves because of the very difficult qualifying yesterday, and we still need to understand why it went that way. Both Kelvin and I struggled a bit more than we expected. And, of course, at Brands Hatch it is extremely difficult when you start outside the top ten. Despite that, we had a really strong first race – with a good start, some good overtakes on track, a great pit stop and then a strong finish by Kelvin. The podium was a great reward and a good turnaround. Unfortunately, we lost some time in the pit stop in the second race, otherwise a better result would



have been possible. But overall, it all came down to the difficult qualifying we had. That is what we will focus on and see what we can improve in the future."

**Max Hesse (#46 BMW M4 GT3 EVO, Team WRT, Race 1: 16th place, Race 2: 4th place):** "Overall, it was another strong weekend. I think we have had very good pace since Paul Ricard, which is very promising. It is a bit of a shame about the penalty in race one, because I think with two fourth places it would have been a great weekend. Especially as we did not have the fastest car, but the guys executed everything perfectly. Overall, I am satisfied. Vale also did a super job, so at least we take away good points from race two."

**Jordan Pepper (#31 BMW M4 GT3 EVO, Team WRT, Race 1: 4th place, Race 2: 7th place):** "After difficult qualifying sessions, we showed real resilience in the races. We drove strongly, and the crew did an incredible job – as we know, Team WRT always leads the pit stop challenge. There were also some entertaining battles on track. Brands Hatch is not really known for overtaking, but we had three or four of them. Race one was great fun, and to finish just off the podium in fourth place was an exceptional result for us. Overall, we are very happy and proud of everyone. Especially because I share the car with Amaury, who is still very new to GT racing – that should not be forgotten. He is still a Silver-rated driver competing in the Pro category. Everyone did a great job, all the cars were very competitive throughout the weekend. It was a very strong showing for BMW M Motorsport, Team WRT and all of us."

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