



DTM

An interview with Maxime Martin: "Driving for a Belgian team as a Belgian makes you feel a bit patriotic."

Munich (DE), 21st April 2016. When the new DTM season gets underway in Hockenheim on 7th May, Bruno Spengler (CA), Marco Wittmann (DE), António Félix da Costa (PT), Timo Glock (DE), Augusto Farfus (BR), Tom Blomqvist (GB), Maxime Martin (BE) and Martin Tomczyk (DE) will be in the cockpits of the eight BMW M4 DTMs for BMW Motorsport. We introduce each of our BMW DTM drivers in a series of interviews while we wait.

Maxime Martin, BMW Team RBM, #36 SAMSUNG BMW M4 DTM.

The 2016 DTM season sees you race for a new team, BMW Team RBM. A Belgian driver in a Belgian team, that must be the perfect fit ...

Maxime Martin: "It's a brand new chapter for me. I had a fantastic time in my two years with BMW Team RMG: Rookie of the Year and seventh overall in 2014 and 2015; a win and a pole position every season. Driving for a Belgian team as a Belgian means things will be quite different. It really makes me feel a bit patriotic. It is important that we work well together. RBM is a very good team that has delivered very good performances in the DTM for many years. I'm really looking forward to working with them."

Tom Blomqvist is your new team-mate. How well do you guys get on?

Martin: "Very well. Tom is a great colleague, really nice and extremely fast. I'm very pleased to be in the same team as him. And I'm sure we will work well together in the future to bring the team forward."

At 22, Tom is still very young. You might be a little older, but you haven't been in the DTM all that long. Can he learn anything from you?

Martin: "I don't know if I can teach him anything about the DTM because I don't have much more experience than him. But I have already driven in various other series. So I have gained some experience that I might be able to pass on to Tom. But as far as the DTM is concerned, he already knows what he is doing."

How satisfied are you with the preparations for the season and the testing?

Martin: "Preparations went really well. Unfortunately, we didn't have much opportunity for testing; ultimately we only have two days before the season starts. After six months of not sitting in a DTM car that isn't a lot. You need to find your rhythm and the right set-up. The test in Hockenheim was really important

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for that. I think that we did a really good job. But in the end, the first qualifying session in Hockenheim will show where we really are."

What are your goals for your third DTM season?

Martin: "Being better. I finished seventh in the drivers' standings twice. So the goal for this season is to finish higher than seventh place."

You also compete in a lot of GT races; in North America, in 24-hour races, in the Blancpain GT Series. Is that an exciting change to the DTM?

Martin: "Naturally the DTM and GT races are totally different, with different cars, different driving styles and a different atmosphere. But I like this change because it keeps you in the racing rhythm. That's very important in my opinion. I have contested a lot of races in my career to date and will try to keep doing that. I'm happy to be at BMW and to always have good conditions in the GT races and be able to win. And it's the same in the DTM. If I am able to win, then I want to."

You drive the BMW M4 DTM and the BMW M6 GT3. How difficult is it for a driver to switch back and forth between these very different tasks?

Martin: "Naturally, you always need a bit of time to get used to the change. But when you know the series and how they work, it's not really that difficult because you don't have to learn something totally new. It usually only takes a little while, and gets easier the more often you do it."

You have also got to know a lot of racetracks in the various series. Which is your favourite track?

Martin: "That's a good question. There are two that I really like. One is definitely Spa-Francorchamps, because it's in my home country. But my absolute favourite is the Nürburgring, which I know really well now. The Nordschleife is totally different from any other track on which you can drive. Twenty-five kilometres, every lap is a new challenge that needs to be mastered. It doesn't get much better than that."

What are your plans for the 24-hour race at the Nürburgring?

Martin: "I also want to do better there than in previous years. I finished second twice and fourth once. I want to win this year. We aren't competing in the BMW M6 GT3 just to take part. We will try to get the win. I was close to it more than once in recent years, I was in the lead for a long time, but never won. Almost like in Spa. I hope that I will have more luck with the BMW M6 GT3."

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The preparations are going pretty well with third place and pole position in the qualifying race aren't they?

Martin: "We are improving the car all the time. Our pole position confirmed this. We need to take note of every detail and continue to learn as much as possible. But the fact that we were so fast in the qualifying race is a good sign. We have a strong overall package with the BMW M6 GT3, which is improving with each outing."

How do you like the new racing version of the BMW M6?

Martin: "The car looks really big from the outside. But it doesn't feel like that when you are driving it. The BMW M6 is very agile. We have an excellent engine. The BMW M6 has a lot of potential, but it is our first season, we still need to make some developments and keep working hard to get wins with this fantastic car."

You contest a lot of races, so you are on the road a lot and often busy. What do you do when you have a free day?

Martin: "That doesn't happen very often. Then I try to relax a bit at home with my fiancée, and to work out a little, which I can do anywhere more or less. However, the priority is to relax with family."

You are expecting a new addition to the family this year. Are you already excited?

Martin: "I'm really excited already. Our baby is due in September. It's going to be a close call since the due date is around our DTM races in Budapest. It's going to be a completely new task for us. I've taken on a lot of challenges in motorsport, but this will be the most important one of my life, and the most difficult. But I'm really looking forward to it."

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