



Media Information

DTM

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An interview with Marco Wittmann: “I think we are far more competitive than we were in 2019”.

- **Interview with two-time DTM champion Marco Wittmann ahead of the DTM season.**
- **Wittmann races for BMW Team RMG in the Schaeffler BMW M4 DTM again.**
- **Wittmann: “I am a fan of racing every weekend”.**

Munich. Roughly nine months have passed since Marco Wittmann (GER) last went racing in the Schaeffler BMW M4 DTM. The delayed start of the 2020 season is now just around the corner for the two-time DTM champion. In an interview, Wittmann talks about the long wait and his expectations of the coming 18 races.

Marco, how much are you looking forward to finally getting the 2020 season underway in a few days?

Marco Wittmann: “The anticipation ahead of finally climbing back into a race car and getting the season started is huge. The later start date is new to everyone and there is also a bit of regret that no fans will be allowed at the circuit. However, I believe we will have the support of the fans watching on television and we will obviously try to put on a really cool show for them. The season-opener at Spa is also new and rather special for us so we are really excited.”

How has the enforced break, due to the pandemic, affected your pre-season preparations?

Wittmann: “Preparations have obviously been a bit different. We had far more time to work on your fitness. The amount of stamina and strength training we did was huge and far greater than usual. Otherwise, we moved the team meetings back a little until we were allowed to meet up again. However, we also did a lot virtually in the meantime – things like Skype meetings, Zoom meetings, etc. That was obviously

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new territory for us all. It actually worked really well, even though I am not really a big fan of virtual stuff. I prefer to speak to people face to face.”

Besides training, what have you been up to?

Wittmann: “I still work in my father’s workshop, even during a normal season. Usually that is one or two days per week, when there are no appointments. The coronavirus situation meant that we had no motorsport appointments, so I actually ended up in the workshop every day. That was really cool, as it is still gives me a great balance and stopped me getting bored. We were fortunate that we never had to close the workshop and could, in principle, continue to work.”

What did you learn last season?

Wittmann: “I believe we primarily spent the winter working on the car, to wipe out the deficiencies we had in the 2019 season. The turbo engine was new to us all and we really struggled with it. We have, however, managed to get on top of the technical issues from last season. I then tried to work on myself – using data and videos from past races. I hope we are well-equipped and have taken a step forward. I think we are far more competitive than we were in 2019.”

The season-opener at Spa throws up a two-day event on a track that is new to most of the drivers. How difficult will it be to go into qualifying on the back of just one practice session?

Wittmann: “It is obviously an extremely compressed weekend, when everything has to run smoothly. The fact that we are racing at Spa for the first time in 15 years will make life a little bit difficult for everyone. Both BMW and Audi had the opportunity to test there for a day, with Augusto Farfus doing the driving for us. We gathered the first basic data there so we will travel to Spa with some sort of set-up already. However, we only have one practice session to change things, then it is straight into qualifying. As a driver, you have to find your feet quickly out on the track – but I like challenges like that. You don’t have a lot of time to think, because everything comes thick and fast and you just have to get everything right. I am looking forward to it.”

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This year, there will be a few back-to-back races. Will that suit you?

Wittmann: "I am a fan of racing every weekend. It will be fascinating to see how that really works out when the season gets underway. I think back-to-back races are cool. You are really fired up and in stress mode. Let's see how we feel after the final weekend (laughs), but it is obviously cool that, despite everything, we have managed to put together a calendar that still allows us to complete nearly all the races. I think that is very good news for the DTM and the fans, as well as for us drivers."

How important will experience be in this extraordinary season? Will it be an advantage for you and BMW Team RMG that you have worked together for so long?

Wittmann: "It is always helpful to have an experienced team and to know each other well, then you already know how to get started and what set-up you need at many racetracks. I think the busy calendar will not make a big difference, as we will not have much time for analyses and everyone is ultimately in the same boat. When we have a double-header, as we will at the Lausitzring and Zolder, then you don't have much time for reflection. You just have to go out and perform again. On top of that, you have the fact that we are racing on different layouts, which I personally find really cool. It is a bit like starting from scratch again the following weekend."

The current situation has forced the cancellation of the planned season-opener at the Norisring. How sorry were you to hear that decision?

Wittmann: "It was an extremely bitter pill for me. I am in direct communication with the organisers, MCN (Motorsport Club Nürnberg), for whom it was really a herculean task. I tried to give a lot of input and to help, and I think we were well on the way to making the event possible. You have to consider that it is not a permanent racetrack, so it costs a lot to set up, for example. Eventually, the city of Nuremberg vetoed it. In these times, it goes without saying that safety has to take priority. Despite that, it was still a real shame for me personally, as it is my home race. A lot of love and emotion goes into that event."



Setting aside the absence of the Norisring this time, which circuits on the calendar are you most looking forward to?

Wittmann: “Two, in fact. Obviously, the opener at Spa, because it is a super cool racetrack and I have driven there twice before – once with Formula BMW and in the BMW M6 GT3. The circuit has a mega history and is a typical old-school, natural racetrack. I am also looking forward to Assen, because that was my most successful weekend last year. It is a very cool racetrack with a great atmosphere and I really like the layout.”

What are your goals for the 2020 season?

Wittmann: “The ultimate goal is definitely to win the title. When you already have two titles, as I do, then you are never happy with second or third place. However, to be able to challenge for the title at the end of the year, we must first score some victories and podiums.”

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