

IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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## **BMW TEAM PTG RETURNS TO ROLEX 24 AT DAYTONA LOOKING FOR THIRD GT-CLASS WIN**

**Winchester, VA - January 27, 2004 ...** When the green flag waves for the start of the 42<sup>nd</sup> Rolex 24 at Daytona next Saturday BMW Team PTG will make its return to the Daytona International Speedway for its first 24-hour race since 1999.

While the race will mark the debut of the BMW of North America, LLC-supported BMW M3s in the Rolex Sports Car Series of the Grand American Road Racing Association, it will also be a significant homecoming for Tom Milner's Winchester, Virginia-based team.

In 1995, the Rolex 24 at Daytona was the very first race for the new BMW M3 effort and a BMW Team PTG M3 qualified on the GT class pole. The feat was repeated the following year as both Team PTG M3s sat on the front of the GT class grid with the M3 of David Donohue, Javier Quiros, John Paul Jr. and Peter Halsmer finishing third in class and ninth overall. BMW Team PTG posted back-to-back wins at the 24-hour race in 1997 and 1998. The 1999 season marked the last year a Team PTG M3 competed at the Rolex 24, giving the team a very credible two wins in five attempts.

"BMW Team PTG has had many successes in the last nine years we have campaigned the BMW M3, but there is still something very special about returning to Daytona for the 24 Hours", said Tom Milner. "Our first win in 1997 was not assured until the closing laps. With ten minutes left in the race we had to pit to replace the windshield and held our breath until the checkered flag fell. To win again in 1998 was equally rewarding and we are looking forward to getting the next one."

BMW Team PTG driver Bill Auberlen posted the second fastest GT time (1:55.121) around the 3.56-mile Daytona road course in the recent January Test Days.

“Certainly we will see when qualifying begins, but I believe we showed in January that we have not given up anything in the four years we have been away,” added Milner.

Co-driving with Auberlen will be another longtime Team PTG driver, Boris Said. Both Auberlen and Said were members of the 1997 and 1998 Rolex 24 winning teams. New since 2003, Team PTG drivers Justin Marks and former Formula Atlantic standout Joey Hand, of Concord, Ohio, will be making their first Daytona starts for Team PTG.

“This will be the first time the latest-generation M3 will compete at Daytona and although we know our competition will be tough we are eager to see where we will be come 1:00 p.m. next Sunday”, said Hernando Carvajal, M Brand and Motorsport Manager of BMW of North America, LLC. “We have nothing but the highest confidence in the M3 and the team.”

Practice and qualifying for the 42<sup>nd</sup> Rolex 24 at Daytona begins on Thursday, January 29th and continues on Friday, January 30th. The race is scheduled to begin at 1:00 PM EST on Saturday with more than 15 hours of the endurance classic televised live on Speed Channel.

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