



BMW Motorsport

Alessandro Zanardi's dream of Paralympic gold comes true.

Munich, 5th September 2012. Former BMW driver Alessandro Zanardi (IT) has added yet another chapter to his remarkable career: the 45-year-old won the gold medal in the time trial on this hand cycle at the Paralympic Games in London (GB).

Zanardi lost both his legs following a horrific crash while racing in the US ChampCar series at the Lausitzring (DE) in 2001, but made a successful return to motorsport just two years later with BMW. At the same time as lining up in the World Touring Car Championship, he set out on a new adventure and began competing in hand cycle races.

Zanardi immediately proved to be competitive in this sport too, scoring a number of fine results in the World Cup to qualify for the Paralympic Games. He has spent the last few months preparing meticulously for the big event. His dream was to win a medal – and the Italian once again made his dream a reality through an enormous amount of passion and an irrepressible determination to succeed.

“Congratulations to Alessandro Zanardi on this unbelievable success,” said BMW Motorsport Director Jens Marquardt. “During his time as a BMW driver, he provided us with countless highlights between 2003 and 2009 – particularly, of course, with his four victories at the wheel of the BMW 320i and BMW 320si WTCC in the World Touring Car Championship. Alex is an outstanding athlete and a perfect example of what can be achieved with dedication and commitment.”

Prior to his crash, Zanardi raced in the ChampCar series, which he won in 1997 and 1998. The crowd favourite also drove in 41 races in the Formula One World Championship. Following his comeback, Zanardi completed 127 races for BMW in the European Touring Car Championship and, from 2005 onwards, in the World Championship. His first win came in Oschersleben (DE) on 28th August 2005 and was followed by victories in Istanbul (TU, 2006) and Brno (CZ, 2008 and 2009). On 25th November 2006 he became the first person who had both legs amputated to take part in a Formula One test, driving a BMW Sauber F1 Team car.

Motorsport



"It was always something special to drive for BMW alongside Alex," said BMW DTM driver Andy Priaulx (GB), who won three titles in the World Touring Car Championship. "He was a great team-mate – and a tough opponent on the track. When it became clear he wanted to compete at the Paralympic Games, I knew straight away he would make it. Alex loves challenges like that, and regularly pulls off the impossible. I know everyone who knows him will be very proud and I want to send him my congratulations."

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