



American Le Mans Series

### **BMW Team RLL qualifies eighth and ninth for Sebring 12 Hours.**

Sebring (US), 15<sup>th</sup> March 2013. The new BMW Z4 GTE experienced another first at Sebring (US) on Friday and took part in its maiden American Le Mans Series (ALMS) qualifying session. In the contest for the top grid positions for the classic 12-hour race, Maxime Martin (BE) was in action driving the "Frozen Black" No. 55 car. Joey Hand (US) took to the track at the wheel of the No. 56 BMW Z4 GTE. Martin clocked the eighth-fastest GT-class time, setting a 1:59.736-minute lap, while Hand was 0.111 seconds behind in ninth. Ferrari's Gianmaria Bruni (IT) secured pole position for the 61<sup>st</sup> staging of the race, posting a lap time of 1:58.815 minutes.

BMW Team RLL had made full use of the previous days at the "Sebring International Raceway" to gain further valuable experience with the BMW Z4 GTE. The race, which will go green on Saturday at 10:30hrs local time, will be the first real endurance test for the newly developed car. Martin will then team up with Bill Auberlen (US) and Jörg Müller (DE), while Hand will alternate at the wheel of the No. 56 car with Dirk Müller (DE) and John Edwards (US).

#### **Bobby Rahal (Team Principal of BMW Team RLL):**

"We have worked really hard this week on preparing the car for the race, not so much for qualifying. The other cars in the field are far more developed, and the teams know them in and out. This is something which has a big impact on a track like Sebring. However, the gap to the front-runners isn't too bad. We should be well-prepared for the race and have a reliable car. The whole team will go on pushing hard, and I'm quite optimistic for Saturday."

#### **Maxime Martin (BMW Z4 GTE – car number 55):**

"Overall I'm happy with my first ALMS qualifying. There wasn't much more we could do today. It's a long race though, and a lot of things can happen. The BMW Z4 GTE is quite good, although we are just at the beginning of its development. However, there's still a lot of work to do. But we already knew this. I am really enjoying my maiden race weekend with BMW Team RLL. Everything is new for me, but I am getting along really well."

#### **Joey Hand (BMW Z4 GTE – car number 56):**

"Of course we always want to start from further up on the grid. Introducing a new car into such a tough series as the ALMS is a big challenge. The BMW Z4 GTE feels really good already. It's all about making the next steps now and getting the full potential out of it. We have come a long way within a reasonably short period of time. We are in the mix – and I'm quite confident for the race."

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