



United SportsCar Championship

Successful USCC debut: BMW Team RLL comes second and fourth at the Daytona 24 Hours.

Daytona (US), 26th January 2014. BMW Motorsport and BMW Team RLL experienced a successful start to the United SportsCar Championship (USCC), securing an impressive podium result in what was the start of a new era in American motor racing. The number 55 BMW Z4 GTLM crossed the line second in the GTLM at the 24-hour race of Daytona (US), after completing a total of 679 laps of the iconic "Daytona International Speedway" road course. Bill Auberlen (US), Andy Priaulx (GB), Joey Hand (US) and Maxime Martin (BE) struggled to match the pace of their direct opposition on the long straights, due to the significant top speed deficit of their BMW Z4 GTLM. However, BMW Team RLL made up for this thanks to a great strategy, consistent lap times and a largely flawless performance by the crew, securing its maiden USCC podium in the process. GTLM victory in the American endurance classic was secured by Porsche's Nick Tandy (GB), Richard Lietz (AT) and Patrick Pilet (FR). At the finish line, final stint drivers Hand and Pilet were separated by only 2.838 seconds.

The number 56 car, driven by Dirk Müller (DE), John Edwards (GB), Dirk Werner (DE) and Graham Rahal (US), also battled it out at the front of GTLM for long periods of the race. It was running in third when it lost ground after the rear right wheel bearing had broken. The necessary repair work cost the BMW drivers several places. But the white BMW Z4 GTLM made a brilliant recovery, ultimately finishing fourth and collecting valuable points at the season opener.

In the fiercely contested GTD class, Turner Motorsport flew the flag for BMW. Augusto Farfus (BR), Paul Dalla Lana (CA), Dane Cameron (US) and Markus Palttala (FI) didn't lose their fighting spirit following several setbacks in the early stages of the race and fought their way back up with the number 94 BMW Z4 GTD. After 24 hours and 659 laps, Turner Motorsport secured seventh in class.

After this promising start to the 2014 USCC season in a race the team had never entered before, Sebring (US) is next on BMW Team RLL's list. On 15th March the two BMW Z4 LMGTs will fight for top positions again at the classic 12-hour race. In the American Le Mans Series Bobby Rahal's (US) team claimed GT wins there in 2011 and 2012 when it was racing a BMW M3 GT.

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Motorsport



Jens Marquardt (BMW Motorsport Director):

"We have every reason to be very satisfied with our first appearance in the new United SportsCar Championship. To finish this ultra-tough race in second and fourth, considering the very difficult conditions for us, is a fantastic success. As far as performance goes, especially our straight-line speed, we obviously had a disadvantage at this circuit compared to our direct competitors. However, we managed to compensate for this through an excellent overall package made of strong drivers, a flawless team and a clever strategy. It was crucial to avoid any mistakes and to get both BMW Z4 GTLMs to the finish. To a large extent, this strategy worked out fine. Just like many other teams in this demanding race, we also lost time due to unscheduled repair work in the pits. However, we were still able to bring our cars home in second and fourth. We can definitely build on this result, especially as most of the other USCC circuits on the calendar should suit the strengths of our car much better than Daytona. Congratulations to Turner Motorsport, too, for P7 in the GTD class. Following a tough starting phase the team never gave up and fought back into the race, delivering a strong performance with the BMW Z4 GTD. Overall it was an impressive debut for the United SportsCar Championship in Daytona. And the 24-hour race had all the ingredients race fans could ask for. This opener was a nice appetiser for the rest of the season."

Bobby Rahal (Team Principal, BMW Team RLL):

"The race is 24 hours, but the 'day' is almost 36 hours long when you add in the time you are at the track before the green. This was BMW Team RLL's first 24-hour race and to have come within some three seconds of victory is quite an achievement. Every member of our team contributed, and to share the race with Graham makes today very special for me. We have started the season with good points, and now it's off to Sebring where we've had great success in previous seasons."

Bill Auberlen (Number 55 BMW Z4 GTLM):

"In this race we have done exactly what we said we were going to do. We said, let the sun come up and let's see where we are. The BMW Z4 GTLM was perfectly reliable. We didn't risk too much then and were waiting to see if we could go racing at the end. It all worked out fine – and was a perfect start to the season."

Andy Priaulx (Number 55 BMW Z4 GTLM):

"Finishing second is a fantastic way to kick off our USCC campaign. I put in three solid stints and had a really valuable learning experience getting to know the cars, drivers and track in Daytona. That is my first GT race in quite a few years, and I am looking forward to the rest of the 2014 championship after this successful start."

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Joey Hand (Number 55 BMW Z4 GTLM):

"It is crazy how our plan worked out. We didn't have the pace but knew in this race you have your best chance of doing well if you don't have any contact and don't have any issues. If you just keep this thing rolling round the racetrack and spend as little time in the pits as possible you stand a chance. We maximised on that and only spent 14 minutes in the pit box in 24 hours. I think that is pretty brilliant. Then the guys at BMW Team RLL worked really hard both here and the shop, and I am very proud to be part of this programme."

Maxime Martin (Number 55 BMW Z4 GTLM):

"For me it has been the easiest 24 hour race I have done, as I have only driven for a few hours. The race has been okay with just a few little issues, but we have managed to stay near the front for most of it. This race is all about keeping out of trouble, and if you succeed you are rewarded with a podium even in such a tough race. The team did a tremendous job and has every reason to be really proud."

Dirk Müller (Number 56 BMW Z4 GTLM):

"I love this race, and what you need to do is push and stay out of trouble. I have done Daytona a couple of times before, but never as part of a championship. So it is a different feeling as you want to push, but at the same time you want to finish for the points. All in all we did a great race, and everybody has done a good job."

John Edwards (Number 56 BMW Z4 GTLM):

"Since the announcement that I would do the full season with BMW I have been looking forward to this race. We knew that Daytona would probably be the toughest track for us on the calendar. To now walk away with P2 and P4 is just amazing. This was a fantastic start to our season. I think we will be a force to be reckoned with in 2014."

Dirk Werner (Number 56 BMW Z4 GTLM):

"We had some tough luck when we had to drive back to the garage to repair the car and this cost us a podium. We didn't make any mistakes and it was a tough race with a lot of incidents. I think we proved that the BMW Z4 GTLM is a good car for endurance racing – and finishing second and fourth is beyond our expectations."

Graham Rahal (Number 56 BMW Z4 GTLM):

"I had a good stint going near the end. Unfortunately a right rear wheel bearing broke. We don't know what caused that, but it may have been some contact earlier as a light hit could cause that. The guys have done a great job, and the car ran really well up to that point. I certainly enjoyed myself driving the BMW Z4 GTLM and hope I get another opportunity soon. The team scored a really impressive result."

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Augusto Farfus (Number 94 BMW Z4 GTD, Turner Motorsport):

"It was the toughest 24-hour event I have ever done, as I think I did about ten hours in the car during the race. It is a shame we lost five laps at the beginning due to an electrical problem with the tail lights. We still could have had a chance to win, but unfortunately we didn't have enough yellows during the night to get the laps back. However, the team did a fantastic job as the car ran without any other issues. It was good for me to start the year like this, and I am ready to start the DTM now."

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