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# **RMW U.S. Press Information**



For

IMMEDIATE

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BMW Team RLL Completes First US Test of BMW M8 GTE; BMW of North America Enhances Driver Lineup as Bill Auberlen Adds New Role as BMW NA Brand Ambassador.

Woodcliff Lake, N.J. - Nov. 30, 2017... This week BMW Team RLL completed the first US test of the BMW M8 GTE at Homestead-Miami Speedway, in Homestead, Fla., in preparation for the upcoming 2018 IMSA WeatherTech SportsCar Championship.

The team's 10th season representing BMW will not only see the debut of a new racing car, but it will also see a change to the driver lineup as Bill Auberlen transitions to a new role in support of BMW of North America's customer racing program as a BMW NA Brand Ambassador, among other duties. Racing fans will not be disappointed though as Bill will join BMW Team RLL for the four endurance races; Rolex 24 at Daytona, 12 Hours of Sebring, Sahlen's Six Hours of the Glen and Petit Le Mans.

Auberlen said, "I am honored to have been asked to become a BMW NA Brand Ambassador and look forward to additional opportunities with BMW of North America. First and foremost I am a racing driver and am looking forward to four races with BMW Team RLL in 2018. My goal remains to get to the top of the list in all-time North









American sports car victories and I want that achievement to be shared with BMW. We are only three wins away. We have not yet determined what else I may be driving but every opportunity in a BMW racing car is a good one."

24-year old Connor De Phillippi will join BMW Team RLL and return to living in his native California after being based in Europe for five years and driving first for Porsche in their Junior program and, most recently, with Audi. In the last two seasons he drove for Land Motorsport, co-driving to wins at the Nurburgring 24 and Petit Le Mans (GTD class) in 2017.

"To be part of the BMW family is something I am very proud of," said De Phillippi. "Driving for BMW Team RLL is quite an achievement for me and I hope I can add to the success of the team next year."

John Edwards returns for his sixth season with BMW Team RLL in 2018. Since joining the team in 2013 he has scored a total of 15 podium finishes, including three victories.

"The M8 GTE will be the third racing car I will have driven for BMW Team RLL and so far I believe it is the coolest," said Edwards. "I look forward to continuing the ongoing development of the car and getting its first victory sooner than later."

Edwards, De Phillippi and Martin Tomczyk were present at the Homestead test. The team will remain in Florida to ready the car for the first IMSA-sanctioned test at Daytona International Speedway on Dec. 5 and 6.

"While I don't believe it could ever be said that Bill Auberlen was underutilized in his first two decades with BMW NA, we have made a mutual decision to take better advantage of his expertise and now to primarily support our growing customer racing programs in addition to competing with BMW Team RLL in the four IMSA endurance races this season.", commented **BMW NA Motorsport Manager Victor Leleu**. "We are delighted that Bill has agreed to become a BMW NA brand ambassador and we fully expect his unbounded enthusiasm for the brand to continue to excite BMW fans with "Bill Power". We welcome John's return and are pleased Connor has joined us for 2018. 2017 ended on a very strong note and we believe our success will continue with the M8 GTE."









Led by Bobby Rahal, BMW Team RLL finished the 2017 IMSA season with four victories including consecutive wins at Mazda Raceway Laguna Seca and Petit Le Mans to close the M6 GTLM program in the biggest way. Since 2009, the team has totaled 17 GT class wins among 68 total podium finishes campaigning the BMW M3, BMW Z4 and BMW M6.

Additional details regarding all BMW Motorsport programs will be released on Dec. 15, 2017 during BMW Motorsport's annual Season Review banquet.

The 2018 IMSA WeatherTech SportsCar Championship season takes the green flag at the 56th annual Rolex 24 At Daytona on January 28, 2018. Follow BMW Team RLL on Twitter at @BMWUSARacing for "from-the-pit-box" updates all weekend.

# **BMW Group in America**

BMW of North America, LLC has been present in the United States since 1975. Rolls-Royce Motor Cars NA, LLC began distributing vehicles in 2003. The BMW Group in the United States has grown to include marketing, sales, and financial service organizations for the BMW brand of motor vehicles, including motorcycles, the MINI brand, and the Rolls-Royce brand of Motor Cars; Designworks, a strategic design consultancy based in California; a technology office in Silicon Valley and various other operations throughout the country. BMW Manufacturing Co., LLC in South Carolina is part of BMW Group's global manufacturing network and is the exclusive manufacturing plant for all X5 and X3 Sports Activity Vehicles and X6 and X4 Sports Activity Coupes. The BMW Group sales organization is represented in the U.S. through networks of 344 BMW passenger car and BMW Sports Activity Vehicle centers, 153 BMW motorcycle retailers, 127 MINI passenger car dealers, and 36 Rolls-Royce Motor Car dealers. BMW (US) Holding Corp., the BMW Group's sales headquarters for North America, is located in Woodcliff Lake, New Jersey.

# The BMW Group

With its three brands BMW, MINI and Rolls-Royce, the BMW Group is the world's leading premium manufacturer of automobiles and motorcycles and also provides premium financial and mobility services. As a global company, the BMW Group operates 31 production and









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assembly facilities in 14 countries and has a global sales network in more than 140 countries.

In 2016, the BMW Group sold approximately 2.367 million cars and 145,000 motorcycles worldwide. The profit before tax was approximately € 9.67 billion on revenues amounting to € 94.16 billion. As of 31 December 2016, the BMW Group had a workforce of 124,729 employees.

The success of the BMW Group has always been based on long-term thinking and responsible action. The company has therefore established ecological and social sustainability throughout the value chain, comprehensive product responsibility and a clear commitment to conserving resources as an integral part of its strategy.

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## Rahal Letterman Lanigan Racing

BMW's partner, Rahal Letterman Lanigan Racing, based in Hilliard, Ohio and co-owned by three-time IndyCar Champion and 1986 Indianapolis 500 winner Bobby Rahal, former CBS Late Show host David Letterman and Mi-Jack co-owner Mike Lanigan, has been competing for over two decades. Prior to the start of their 26th season of competition in 2017, the team had compiled 38 victories, 51 poles, 151 podium finishes, three series championships (1992, 2010, 2011) and claimed an Indianapolis 500 victory (Buddy Rice in 2004). In 2009 the team joined BMW of North America to campaign the new BMW M3 in the American Le Mans Series. The following year the team won both the Manufacturer and Team Championships in the GT category and swept all three GT titles - Manufacturer, Team and Driver - in 2011. In 2012 the team finished second in the Team Championship and third in the Manufacturer Championship and in 2013, the team finished second in the Driver, Team and Manufacturer Championship. The 2014 season brought a new challenge with the creation of the IMSA United SportsCar Championship and the team finished on the podium six times including four secondplace finishes. In 2015, the team earned three wins, two poles and a total of eight









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podium finishes to finish second in the Manufacturer, Team and Driver championships and added two poles and three podiums in 2016. Prior to the start of the 2017 season, BMW Team RLL had won 13 races, 22 poles and 60 podium finishes.

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