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**BMW Team RLL racing for third consecutive GTLM class Rolex 24 At Daytona victory - Team to focus on Michelin Endurance Cup in 2021.**

**Woodcliff Lake, N.J. – Jan. 19, 2021 . . .** To win the Rolex 24 At Daytona once is a major achievement. To win it a second time is something very few teams have done. This January 30 – 31, BMW Team RLL will be racing for a third consecutive Rolex 24 GTLM class victory at the twice-around-the-clock classic endurance event.

The 2021 IMSA WeatherTech SportsCar Championship season will be the fourth for the BMW M8 GTE, with the 2020 season having been the most successful to-date. Last year, a second Rolex 24 win was the first of nine podium finishes that included a second victory at Road Atlanta and culminated with the GTLM Michelin Endurance Cup and second place in GTLM driver points standings. This season will see BMW Team RLL focus on the four races that compose the Michelin Endurance Cup.

“Motorsport and specifically an IMSA program have been fundamental to our marketing efforts in North America,” said **Victor Leleu, BMW NA Motorsport Manager**. “This year will see us focus on the four races that compose the Michelin Endurance Cup and the 52 toughest hours in sports car endurance racing. Of course, we would like to see all of our BMW fans at every IMSA venue, but this is the decision we have made in order to ensure a winning future. We look forward to the competition in Daytona, Sebring, Watkins Glen and Road Atlanta.”

Leleu added, “Returning to Daytona always reminds us of the 2018 race and being joined by Alex Zanardi. Spending time with such an inspirational man is something none of us will ever forget. Forza Alex!”

The driver lineup for the Rolex 24 will be anchored by the four 2020 full-season drivers; Connor De Philippi and Bruno Spengler in the No. 25 MOTUL BMW M8 GTE, and John Edwards and Jesse Krohn in the No. 24 MOTUL BMW M8 GTE. 2019 Rolex 24 co-driver and winner Philipp Eng will rejoin the No. 25 M8 GTE. Making his first start at Daytona, veteran Timo Glock will be the fourth driver in the No. 25 car. Augusto Farfus, co-driver in both previous Rolex 24 victories, will rejoin the No. 24 M8 GTE. Marco Wittmann, 2014 and 2016 DTM champion, will complete the No. 24 M8 GTE quartet.

“It is a real accomplishment to win the Rolex 24 at Daytona once let alone do it twice, and particularly to do it twice in a row.” **stated Bobby Rahal, Team Principal**. “The pressure is on, right? Twenty-four hours is obviously a long race. It sounds simplistic to say that whoever spends the least amount of time in the pits wins but that’s kind of the way it works. Obviously, you have to have the pace, but you also have to have the reliability. Even a place like Daytona exacts its own brand of difficulty whether its traffic, surviving the race not being hit by other cars and so on. There are so many things that can conspire to knock you out of leading or winning the race. It’s really a tough, tough race. We just have to go out and put together a race like we have in the past. If we do the best possible job that we can, who knows, we might be in the winner’s circle again.”

Commenting on the newest additions to the driver lineup he continued, “I like Marco a lot. He’s a two-time DTM champion which obviously says a lot about his skills. Marco is one heck of a driver and a real charger and I’m very happy that he’s going to be a part of our lineup. Timo has been part of the BMW Motorsport family for many years in all kinds of series and events whether it was DTM or the 24 Hours of Spa and so on. He’s clearly got



the talent and skills as well (as Marco). Thanks to our relationship with BMW, we have always been fortunate to have great drivers and this year is no different.”

Bill Auberlen, the BMW veteran and all-time IMSA win leader, and Robby Foley will be supported by 2019 Rolex 24 winner Colton Herta and newcomer Aidan Read at Daytona, co-driving the No. 96 Turner Motorsport BMW M6 GT3 in the GT Daytona class.

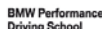
The 59<sup>th</sup> Rolex 24 At Daytona will take the green flag at 3:40 p.m. on Saturday, Jan. 30. The race will be broadcast on a mixture of NBC broadcast and streaming properties. Check your listings. Follow us on Twitter @BMWUSARacing for news from the pit box and get live scoring and in-car camera views at IMSA.com.

**John Edwards, driver No. 24 MOTUL BMW M8 GTE:** “While the off-season was short, I’m thrilled to be going back racing again! Last year’s 24 was an intense, thrilling race right down to the end and we walked away with new Rolex watches. The competition is strong again this year, but I’m confident we can pull it off to get BMW Team RLL their third straight win at the biggest race of the year.”

**Jesse Krohn, driver No. 24 MOTUL BMW M8 GTE:** “Daytona has been a good track for the team these past two years. We got a lot of things right and learned a great deal during this time. It goes without saying that there are a lot of things that can go wrong at a 24-hour race, but with the two wins recently it seems we have found the key to enjoying success in Daytona. We have strong drivers in both cars, and I am really looking forward to racing alongside John, Augusto and Marco. Augusto has an incredible wealth of experience in North America, he doesn’t need anyone to explain Daytona to him. Marco is extremely fast and no doubt it won’t take him long to learn what it takes in Daytona. He has been here before, so knows what’s in store.”

**Augusto Farfus, driver No. 24 MOTUL BMW M8 GTE:** “Daytona is always a very special, magical place for me. The race is emotional. Our BMW M8 GTE has always been strong there and I got the win there the past two years. So, I am really happy to be involved again this year and hopefully to be able to help the team celebrate another success.”

**Marco Wittmann, driver No. 24 MOTUL BMW M8 GTE:** “It’s great that the new year kicks off with a highlight. It will be my first race of the season and my debut in the BMW M8 GTE. I contested the 24 Hours of Daytona for Turner Motorsport back in



2016. Obviously, the race will be very different due to the pandemic, but the hygiene and safety measures stood the test in the DTM and at the 24 Hours Nürburgring in 2020. I'm definitely looking forward to getting started."

**Connor De Phillippi, driver No. 25 MOTUL BMW M8 GTE:** "A new season brings a fresh set of goals! I am really excited to have another strong driver lineup for the Rolex 24 this year and I feel very confident in our work over the off season. It's always a great show at Daytona and I'm looking forward getting back to work with my BMW Team RLL crew."

**Bruno Spengler, driver No. 25 MOTUL BMW M8 GTE:** "The Rolex 24 is always a highlight for me. I really enjoy the track and the atmosphere. Last year, the No. 25 M8 was capable of the win, but we had some technical issues. This year we only need a bit more luck. Connor and I had a great season last year and I'm ready to get started."

**Philipp Eng, driver No. 25 MOTUL BMW M8 GTE:** "I am very much looking forward to coming back to Daytona and to be racing again with BMW Team RLL. The team and drivers know the car inside out and I am sure we are very well prepared for the big one. It would be a dream to score a hat-trick, but we also know that we will be facing very tough competition".

**Timo Glock, driver No. 25 MOTUL BMW M8 GTE:** "I'm really excited to see what awaits me at Daytona because both the track and the BMW M8 GTE are totally new to me. I will really use the test drives ahead of the race weekend to get used to everything. I'm particularly looking forward to the very special experience of a 24-hour race, which I last had the pleasure of in 2015 when I competed at Spa-Francorchamps alongside Alex Zanardi and Bruno Spengler. I have strong team-mates and am hoping for a good result. The BMW M8 GTE and BMW Team RLL have already proved they have the potential in recent years."

## **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 Rolls-Royce Motor Cars; Designworks, a strategic design consultancy based in California;



technology offices in Silicon Valley and Chicago, and various other operations throughout the country. BMW Manufacturing Co., LLC in South Carolina is the BMW Group global center of competence for BMW X models and manufactures the X3, X4, X5, X6 and X7 Sports Activity Vehicles. The BMW Group sales organization is represented in the U.S. through networks of 348 BMW passenger car and BMW Sports Activity Vehicle centers, 144 BMW motorcycle retailers, 119 MINI passenger car dealers, and 38 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.

### **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 three decades. Prior to the start of their 30th season of competition in 2021, the team had compiled 54 victories, 65 poles, 213 podium finishes, three series championships (1992, 2010, 2011), claimed two Indianapolis 500 victories (Buddy Rice in 2004, Takuma Sato in 2020) and two Rolex 24 at Daytona victories. 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. Since 2014, BMW Team RLL has competed in the GTLM class of the IMSA WeatherTech SportsCar Championship with a two-car program and has brought their total to 22 wins – including the 2019 and 2020 Rolex 24 at Daytona endurance races, 28 poles and 88 podium finishes prior to the start of the 2021 season. The team earned second-place finishes in the Manufacturer, Team and Driver championships in 2015 and 2017 and was the 2020 Michelin Endurance Cup champions.

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**Journalist note:** Information about BMW Group and its products in the USA is available to journalists on-line at [www.bmwgroupusanews.com](http://www.bmwgroupusanews.com) and [www.press.bmwna.com](http://www.press.bmwna.com).

