BMW at the Nürburgring 24 Hours – PREVIEW.

Munich, 7th June 2004. The countdown is well under way. This coming weekend will see Team BMW Motorsport embark on one of the toughest long-distance races in existence – the Nürburgring 24 Hours. On Saturday, 12th June, at 15 hrs local time, the two 500 bhp BMW M3 GTRs will take off from the grid in the Eifel, driven in turns by Germans Dirk Müller, Jörg Müller and Hans-Joachim Stuck (car number 42) and by Duncan Huisman (NLD), Pedro Lamy (PRT) and Boris Said (USA) in car number 43.

"A marathon of this kind is an incredible sporting and technical challenge," says BMW Motorsport Director Mario Theissen. "It's a matter of speed, teamwork, strategy and reliability. We have a good driver lineup, and the team of engineers from BMW Motorsport and Schnitzer Motorsport have meticulously prepared the two GT coupés. The target now is to achieve the best possible result in the race. But you can never fully calculate what might happen in the course of 24 hours on what is arguably the world's toughest race track."

With 16 overall victories and 86 class wins, BMW is by far the most successful manufacturer in this event, which was inaugurated in 1970. The winner of that year's debut race was Hans-Joachim Stuck in a BMW 2002 ti. He was also at the wheel in BMW's latest overall win to date: in 1998, a BMW 320d entered the history books when it became the first diesel-powered car to win a marathon of this kind.

Like Stuck, Lamy is also a two-times winner of the 24-hour event in the Eifel. The Portuguese driver was part of the winning team in 2001 and 2002. "Experience with long-distance races, GT cars and the Nordschleife," stresses Theissen, "was a prerequisite when signing on all six drivers."

All three criteria were consolidated in test outings under racing conditions. On 4th April, Team BMW Motorsport had taken part in a three-and-a-half-hour long-distance race on the Nordschleife with two BMW M3 GTRs. Dirk Müller won with co-driver Stuck. The Huisman/Lamy/Said trio came second. A further preparatory race on the Nordschleife on 15th May was won from pole by Stuck/Said/Huisman in a BMW M3 GTR.

Stats and facts:

- 24.427 kilometres is the distance covered by a single lap of the course, which comprises the short version of the Grand Prix circuit and the legendary Nürburgring Nordschleife. 38 left-hand turns and 45 right-handers have to be negotiated on each lap.

- The field of starters is made up of 220 cars spanning a range of performance categories. It turns the pit area into a bustling hive of activity. The two BMW M3 GTRs will share their garage with another six cars – two BMWs and four MINIs.

- Last year 194,000 visitors came to the Eifel for the race weekend.

Motorsport

- On Wednesday, 9th June, the drivers will appear on the track before fans for the first time and will also be signing autographs. Racing Day is held at Adenau on Thursday, 10th June, and the timed practice sessions are on Friday. The race starts at 15 hrs local time on Saturday.

Innovations in advance of the race:

- **Data viewing all around the Nordschleife.** In 2004, Team BMW Motorsport will be using the GPRS (General Packet Radio Service) mobile data transmission system for the first time to ensure a steady stream of data from the two BMW M3 GTRs. The previous data transmission technology covered only about ten percent of the extensive and hilly Nordschleife during events, which meant the race engineers had to grope in the dark, as it were, for minutes on end. This weekend, an uninterrupted flow of real-time data on operating conditions and GPS positioning should be available, and not just in the pits. BMW Motorsport Director Mario Theissen, for example, will also be able to log into the system live from the Canadian Grand Prix. The MITS solution was developed and implemented by Cologne-based company infoware GmbH in close collaboration with T-Mobile and BMW. At its heart is the black box inside the car containing a GPS receiver, GPRS radio modem and interface for the CAN (Controller Area Network) bus which provides the readings from the car. Special servers collate all the information and convert them into user-friendly presentations for the engineers.

- **Fans kept in the picture at BMW Motorsport.** A wealth of information and entertainment is on offer at the website www.bmw-motorsport.com. Live timing and live webcams keep visitors posted around the clock. There are also background reports on Team BMW Motorsport, on the BMW M3 GTR and the drivers, as well as the latest interviews and news at two-hourly intervals.

- **Nighttime vision for drivers in the Eifel.** The quality of the lighting system is a make or break factor in the 24 Hour Race. That's why the BMW M3 GTRs have an extra xenon headlamp on either side. This additional light source is made and mounted by hand. The housing stems from the 3 Series and is enhanced by components from the latest 7 Series. The headlights undergo exactly the same tests as prototype production headlamps – on the vibration test stand and in the light tunnel at BMW's Research and Innovation Centre. The close relations between BMW Motorsport and the serial production engineers made this development possible. The final adjustment of the lighting system will be made in consultation with the drivers. Eight sets of these headlights have been produced, with each individual unit requiring 18 hours of manual work to make. In addition, smaller xenon lights are mounted in the front air dam to illuminate the left and right areas immediately in front of the vehicle.

- **Television for those at home.** DSF will be showing live broadcasts of the timed practice sessions and the race in a total of eight transmissions.

Service

- The BMW press kit, press releases and latest pictures on the Nürburgring 24 Hour Race are downloadable at www.press.bmw.de. The photo archive will be regularly updated during the race.

- Trackside press contact: Heike Bartsch, BMW Corporate Communications, Mobile: 0172 – 84 85 998, Tel: 089–382 33115, heike.bartsch@bmw.de

- Journalists can consult the BMW Motorsport press team at the press centre, where they will be issuing regular press releases.

- There will be an opportunity to interview the drivers in the BMW Lounge in the Tower.