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Maxime Martin and Dirk Müller celebrate victory in the Blancpain Sprint Series – Andy Priaulx and Rob Collard shine at BTCC season opener at Brands Hatch.

Whether in the DTM, the United SportsCar Championship, or countless other championships: week after week BMW teams and drivers around the world do battle for points, victories and titles. Away from the track too, members of the large BMW Motorsport family around the world are also creating headlines. The "BMW Motorsport News" allows us to regularly summarise all the action for you in a compact and informative manner. This way, you are always up to speed.

Blancpain Sprint Series: Martin and Müller celebrate victory at Nogaro.

BMW works drivers Maxime Martin (BE) and Dirk Müller (DE) made successful guest appearances in the Blancpain Sprint Series. At the season opener at Nogaro (FR), they won the main race on Easter Monday in BMW Sports Trophy Team Brasil's BMW Z4 GT3. In doing so, they secured the first ever victory in the series for the Brazilian team, which they raced for this weekend. In Sunday's qualifying, Martin missed out pole position by only a few hundredths of a second. In the following qualifying race, Müller and Martin were fighting for the win until the very end and finished second. The main race initially went perfectly and according to plan: With a strong move, Martin took the lead on the opening lap and after this consistently increased his gap to the rest of the field. After the pit stop, Müller was running in second for a short while, but after only a few laps he took the BMW Z4 GT3 back to the front with a remarkable move and kept the lead until the finish of this exciting race. The Brazilian twins, Ricardo and Rodrigo Sperafico, also claimed a top-ten result, coming home tenth in the second BMW Z4 GT3 from BMW Sports Trophy Team Brasil. Next week Martin will return to the cockpit of his BMW M4 DTM – at the official ITR test at Oschersleben (DE).

Three questions to … Dirk Müller and Maxime Martin.

Congratulations, Dirk and Maxime, on this victory. Dirk, how was the race for you?

Dirk Müller: "It was a very emotional victory and it was great to see the team celebrating beneath the podium. The key to success was Maxime's fantastic stint, when he took the lead early on and opened a gap. As they had done in the qualifying race, the team again did a sensational job at the pit stop. The tyre and driver change was incredibly quick, even quicker than I had expected. Unfortunately I then apparently did not press the ignition button properly and lost some time due to that. This happens to you only once in a life time – if it happens at all. From then on, I just went on maximum attack. It was great fun. I retook the lead with a move in turn one. Normally you don't overtake there – but I just gave it a try. On the closing laps I just had to control my gap to my rivals. It was fantastic."

Maxime, how happy are you after this victory?

Maxime Martin: “I am very happy. I had a really good start and was able to take the lead. From then on, I pulled away a bit and controlled the race from the front. Dirk than did a fantastic job in the second part of the race. He made a great move to retake the lead and kept his rivals at bay after that. I really enjoyed competing with Dirk here in the Blancpain Sprint Series. I want to thank BMW Sports Trophy Team Brasil for giving us a really good car. We became stronger and stronger over the weekend and in the end won the most important race.”

Dirk, how did you like working with Maxime and BMW Sports Trophy Team Brasil?

Dirk Müller: “It was great fun to work on the fine-tuning of the BMW Z4 GT3 together with Maxime and the team and to further improve the car step by step. The team made us feel very welcome from the first moment on and we felt really comfortable there. The guys did an amazing job over the weekend and really deserved that victory.”

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BTCC: Priaulx and Collard shine at Brands Hatch.
The first three rounds of the British Touring Car Championship (BTCC) were held at Brands Hatch (GB) over the Easter weekend - and the first race was won by West Surrey Racing’s Rob Collard (GB) in the BMW 125i M Sport. A strong start, that saw the experienced driver improve from fifth to second, turned out to be the foundation for this fantastic victory in the very first race of the season. For his first race back in the championship after an absence of 13 years Andy Priaulx (GB) put his BMW 125i M Sport on pole position for race one. BMW works driver Priaulx led for the first 13 laps of the 24 lap race, but finished ninth after dropping back down the field as his soft tyres went off. For race two Priaulx started from the front row of the grid, after setting the second fastest lap in race one. He finished second, just 0.040secs behind the winning Honda of Gordon Shedden (GB). The grid for race three saw the top ten from race two reversed with BMW's Sam Tordoff (GB) fourth, Priaulx ninth and Collard 16th. The final race was won by the Honda of Matt Neal (GB) with Tordoff fourth, Priaulx eighth, while Collard retired after going off into the gravel trap on lap one. Neal leads the drivers’ championship, but Priaulx is only three points behind in fourth.

British GT: Two podiums for the BMW Z4 GT3 at Oulton Park.
Oulton Park (GB) was the venue for the 2015 season opener of the British GT Championship this weekend. It turned out to be a successful Easter Monday for the BMW Teams, with two podiums for the BMW Z4 GT3. In race one, Lee Mowle (GB) and Joe Osborne (GB) finished third in the number 888 car of Triple Eight Racing. The number 1 BMW Z4 GT3 of Barwell/Ecurie Ecosse drivers Marco Attard (GB) and Alexander Sims (GB) crossed the line in sixth, despite the fact that their car had been damaged when it was hit by a rival. In race two, it was Attard’s and Sims’ turn to climb onto the podium. They came home third, while Mowle/Osborne finished fifth. Barwell/Team Russia experienced bad luck this Monday: After they qualified third, John Minshaw (GB) and Phil Keen (GB) retired in both races.



GT4 European Series: Class wins for Braams and Grammatico at Nogaro.
The new season of the GT4 European Series also got underway at the "Coupes de Paques" in Nogaro (FR). Two races were held at the opener, one on Easter Sunday and one on Easter Monday. In the first race, Simon Knap (NL) and Rob Severs (NL) in the BMW M3 GT4 from Ekris Motorsport finished fourth. Liesette Braams (NL) in the BMW M3 GT4 from Las Moras Racing got the win in the AM class. In the second race on Monday, André Grammatico (FR) finished third overall on the podium and was winner of the AM class with his BMW M3 GT4 of BMW Espace Bienvenue. Braams crossed the line in seventh overall, while Knap/Severs were classified tenth.

Japanese Super GT: Season opener in Okayama.
The new season of the Japanese Super GT Championship kicked off in Okayama (JP) this weekend. Two BMW Z4 GT3s competed in the GT300 class at the first race of the season. In wet conditions, Morio Nitta (JP) and Shigekazu Wakisaka (JP) in the BMW Z4 GT3 from the LM corsa team finished ninth. Jörg Müller (DE) and Seiji Ara (JP) from BMW Sports Trophy Team Studie didn't fare quite so well, retiring shortly after the start of the race.

BMW M235i Racing Cup Belgium: Michael Schrey wins debut race in Spa-Francorchamps.
The BMW M235i Racing is now also conquering the racetracks in Belgium and the Netherlands: 2015 is the inaugural season of the new BMW M235i Racing Cup Belgium. The three-hour debut race took place at the "Trophée des Fagnes" in Spa-Francorchamps (BE) on Easter Sunday. Michael Schrey (DE) from Team WSM – H&R Spezialfedern took the first win in the BMW M235i Racing Cup Belgium class. Second place went to Team Dreszer Motorsport with Maciej Dreszer (PL) and Stéphane Kox (NL). The duo of Frederic Bouvy (BE) and Christian Kelders (BE) in the BMW M235i Racing from No Speed Limit finished third. A total of seven races will be held in Spa-Francorchamps (BE), Zolder (BE) and Zandvoort (NL) in the 2015 debut season.

FIA Formula E Championship: BMW i8 Safety Car and BMW i3 Medical Car at Long Beach ePrix.
The BMW i8 Safety Car and the BMW i3 Medical Car made their second guest appearances in the US in less than two weeks on Saturday. After the Miami ePrix in Florida, the sixth race of the FIA Formula E Championship season was held on the legendary Long Beach street circuit (US) in California. BMW i is the "Official Vehicle Partner" in the innovative race series for electrically powered formula cars. BMW DTM driver António Félix da Costa (PT) finished seventh in Long Beach. Victory went to Nelson Piquet Jr. (BR). The next race in the FIA Formula E Championship also takes place on a famous street circuit; the BMW i8 Safety Car and the BMW i3 Medical Car will be on duty at the Monaco ePrix in Monte Carlo (MC) on 9th May.

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