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Chip Ganassi Racing triumphs in Daytona – BMW Sports Trophy winner Thomas Biagi delighted with BMW M3 DTM drive.

Whether in the DTM, the American Le Mans Series, 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” now allows us to regularly summarise all the action for you in a compact and informative manner. This way, you are always up to speed.

Chip Ganassi Racing wins the 24 Hours of Daytona with BMW Power.

The number 01 BMW Riley run by Chip Ganassi Racing won the 24-hour classic in Daytona (US). At the end of 709 laps of thrilling racing, Juan Pablo Montoya (CO) crossed the finish line with a 21.921 second lead over the second-placed Corvette. Over the course of the 24 hours, Montoya had alternated behind the wheel of the Daytona prototype, which was powered by a BMW engine, with Scott Pruett (US), Memo Rojas (MX) and Charlie Kimball (US). Victory for Pruett saw him draw level with the previous record winner Hurley Haywood (US) on five wins. This was the second overall victory in Daytona for Chip Ganassi Racing and BMW, following their triumph in 2011. Two years ago, the victorious team included BMW works driver Joey Hand (US). Hand was back behind the wheel for the team owned by US motor racing legend Chip Ganassi (US) again this year. However, the number 02 BMW Riley failed to finish the race. Before retiring, Hand and his fellow drivers Scott Dixon (AU), Dario Franchitti (GB) and Jamie McMurray (US) had also held the lead.

Tough luck for Turner Motorsport in the GT class.

BMW was also represented in the GT class at this year's 24 Hours of Daytona. However, the race weekend did not run entirely to plan for the Turner Motorsport team and its two BMW M3s. When a technical fault resulted in Andy Priaulx (GB) crashing in the final practice session, the number 93 car was so badly damaged that it was unable to start the race. As a result, Team Principal Will Turner (US) lined up at the 24-hour marathon with just one BMW M3 (number 94). Bill Auberlen (US), Paul Dalla Lana (CA), Billy Johnson (US), Boris Said (US) and Maxime Martin (BE) alternated behind the wheel. Turner Motorsport ultimately had to settle for 18th in the GT class. Prior to the start of the race, Priaulx had presented the Alzheimer's charity “Highway to Help” with a cheque for 1000 dollars on behalf of Crowne Plaza Hotels & Resorts. The cheque was received by Brian Johnson, the lead singer in the band AC/DC.



Three questions for Thomas Biagi after his debut in the BMW M3 DTM.

Thomas, was the test in the BMW M3 DTM a dream come true for you?

Thomas Biagi: "That and more! I am so grateful to BMW Motorsport for giving me the unique opportunity to drive the BMW M3 DTM. Although I am a racing driver, I am primarily still a huge BMW fan. Just pulling on the BMW racing overalls made me unbelievably proud. When I saw myself in the overalls in the hotel room that morning, I was overjoyed. I was welcomed with open arms, and in a very professional manner, by everyone in the team. I immediately felt like one of the BMW family."

What was going through your head the first time you pulled out of the garage in the BMW M3 DTM?

Biagi: "When you are sat in the car, you are so focussed that you don't have any time to think about everything that is going on around you, or to enjoy this special moment when your dream comes true. It is simply unbelievable how much downforce you have in the BMW M3 DTM, particularly in the quick corners. Having that much traction in the fast bends was a completely new and unusual experience for me. It is unbelievably difficult to push that car to its limit. Getting 80 or 90 per cent out of the BMW M3 DTM is no problem. It is the ability to tease the final few per cent out, in order to take it to the limit, that shows the class of the DTM drivers."

What was your biggest concern ahead of the test?

Biagi: "That I might make a mistake out on the track. Fortunately, however, that was not the case. Unfortunately the test day was over far too quickly. I was getting more used to the car all the time, but then the four and a half hours were suddenly up. I have actually been behind the wheel of a Formula One car before, but have to say driving the BMW M3 DTM was much more exciting for me. This test in Valencia was the best afternoon of my life."

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