BMW Motorsport

## Alessandro Zanardi completes his first outing with the BMW Z4 GT3 – Season's preparation with ROAL Motorsport starts in Adria.

Adria (IT), 24th January 2014. The countdown for Alessandro Zanardi's comeback with BMW is on: on Thursday the 47-year-old Italian completed a successful roll-out with the BMW Z4 GT3, which has been modified to meet his unique requirements. The roll-out took place at the "Adria Raceway" near Venice (IT). In 2014 Zanardi will race as a BMW works driver in the Blancpain GT Sprint Series with ROAL Motorsport.

He used the first outing at Adria to get acquainted with the BMW Z4 GT3, which is still new to him. At the same time, Team Principal Roberto Ravaglia's (IT) crew collected valuable information how to further modify the car in order to perfectly meet the requirements of the racing driver who had both his legs amputated. This first test was very satisfying for Zanardi and ROAL Motorsport.

"I don't want to sound too excited, but it was at least as good as I could have dreamt it would be. The car is so nice to drive and I am back with a team where I am meeting a lot of old friends", said Zanardi, who raced with ROAL Motorsport from 2003 to 2009. "The BMW Z4 GT3 is a lot of fun, it is powerful and it suits my natural driving style quite well. Regarding all the special controls that are necessary for a guy like me to drive the machine, the starting point was certainly as good as we could hope for. For sure there is still a lot of work to do, but I have no doubt we will get the job done. With what we have learned on this first day, we know what we have to do. We will now use a brake pedal of a different size and modify the mechanical system with which I control the throttle mechanism, in order to allow me to accelerate perfectly out of corners. Overall, the outcome of my first day of testing could not have been better and I am pretty confident we definitely have enough time to show up well prepared for the first race."

"It was a magic day, with Alex coming back to the track and to us", added Ravaglia. "We had many great years together in the WTCC, and so we are delighted that Alex decided, together with BMW, to return to motorsport and to race with ROAL Motorsport again. When he was going out of the garage it was a very emotional moment. I have to admit that I was close to crying when he drove down the pit-lane in our car. The first test went very well. We confirmed that the special equipment we developed for him together with BMW Motorsport is working. Certainly we have to improve and modify a lot of things, but we are happy with this first test. Alex did around 150 kilometres and, despite that fact that he has been away from motor racing for four years, he still did really good lap times. I am confident that we can do a good job during this season in the Blancpain GT Sprint Series."

Zanardi lost both legs in a serious crash while racing in 2001, but only two years later he successfully returned to motorsport with BMW. Among other things, he contested in the FIA World Touring Car Championship (WTCC) for several seasons, where he celebrated four race wins. Having won two gold medals on his handbike at the 2012 Paralympics in London (GB) and completed a test in the BMW M3 DTM in the same year, he is now set to contest a full season for BMW for the first time since

2009. Zanardi's first race in the Blancpain GT Sprint Series is scheduled for the 21st April in Nogaro (FR).

**Press contact:**
Jörg Kottmeier, Phone.: +49 (0) 170 566 6112, joerg.kottmeier@bmw.de
Danilo Coglianese, Phone: +49 (0) 176 601 72405, danilo.coglianese@bmw.de
Ingo Lehbrink, Phone: +49 (0) 176 203 40224, ingo.lehbrink@bmw.de

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