



BMW Motorsport News – Issue 03/14
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First outing for Zanardi in the BMW Z4 GT3 – Strong showing at the Daytona 24 Hours.

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.

Zanardi is back on the racetrack.

He has been waiting for this moment for a long time: Alessandro Zanardi (IT) is back on the racetrack. The BMW works driver was at the “Adria Raceway” in Venice (IT) this week, where he completed a successful roll-out in the BMW Z4 GT3, with which he will compete in the 2014 Blancpain Sprint Series. The car has been specially modified to meet the unique requirements of the 47-year-old. The first test in his new race car reunited Zanardi with a lot of familiar faces: the Italian drove for ROAL Motorsport in touring car series between 2003 and 2009. He will also contest his comeback season with Team Principal Roberto Ravaglia’s (IT) outfit.

Three questions for ... Alessandro Zanardi.

Alessandro, how was your roll-out with the BMW Z4 GT3?

Alessandro Zanardi: “I don’t want to sound too excited, but it was at least as good as I could have dreamt it would be. I am very grateful to Roberto Ravaglia and Aldo Preo of ROAL Motorsport, to Jens Marquardt and to all the people at BMW Motorsport who made this possible. I have a new car that is so nice to drive, I am working with a team of old friends and I am really, really proud to wear the BMW Motorsport colours as a works driver. The roll-out was a good start. For sure we need to further improve the modifications that were made for me. But we already know what changes we need to do. I also need to get a feeling with my “baby” and develop a relationship with it. But now it is only the end of January, we are already at the circuit, we will gain more and more experience and I am pretty confident we will be well prepared for the season.”

Why did you decide to return to the cockpit, and what are your goals for the 2014 season?

Zanardi: “What was driving me was a combination of passion and ambition. Of course, the passion has always been greater than my ambition. Otherwise I don’t think I would have got to where I am today. If you are only ambitious, this does not last very long. Of course I would be happier if down the road I can win a race. I would not be here otherwise. But overall I want to try to finish every weekend knowing that I have done with my team our best in order to achieve the best possible result. There are plenty of good drivers with strong cars and, with the personal problems I have, it would be illogical to believe that I can blow everybody away and win week in and week out. But we are going to try our best.”



Will the fans still see you racing your handbike?

Zanardi: "I can't stop doing something that I love. Therefore I will carry on with handbikes. The motorsport calendar is well spread over the season and, therefore, it will leave me with plenty of time to do other things, one of which is certainly my activity as a hand cyclist. Of course, I have to accept that I have to make some compromises. But my aim is also to go to the games in Rio de Janeiro in 2016. In that season I probably will have to make a choice either one thing or the other, because you cannot prepare for the Olympic Games while you are also competing in motorsport. But 2016 is in two years' time. Let's focus on what we have now. What really matters is what I am doing right now, and right now I am very, very happy and excited."

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24h Daytona: BMW Team RLL claims podium finish in Daytona.

BMW Motorsport and BMW Team RLL experienced a successful start to the United SportsCar Championship (USCC), securing an impressive podium result in what was the start of a new era in American motor racing. The number 55 BMW Z4 GTLM with Bill Auberlen (US), Andy Priaulx (GB), Joey Hand (US) and Maxime Martin (BE) at the wheel crossed the line second in the GTLM class at the 24-hour race of Daytona (US). The number 56 car, driven by Dirk Müller (DE), John Edwards (GB), Dirk Werner (DE) and Graham Rahal (US), also battled it out at the front of GTLM for long periods of the race. It was running in third when it lost ground after the rear right wheel bearing had broken. The necessary repair work cost the BMW drivers several places. But the white BMW Z4 GTLM made a brilliant recovery, ultimately finishing fourth and collecting valuable points at the season opener. GTLM victory in the American endurance classic was secured by Porsche's Nick Tandy (GB), Richard Lietz (AT) and Patrick Pilet (FR). In the fiercely contested GTD class, Turner Motorsport flew the flag for BMW. Augusto Farfus (BR), Paul Dalla Lana (CA), Dane Cameron (US) and Markus Palttala (FI) didn't lose their fighting spirit following several setbacks in the early stages of the race and fought their way back up with the number 94 BMW Z4 GTD. After 24 hours, Turner Motorsport secured seventh in class.

CTSCC: Triumphant season opener for BMW in Daytona.

The BMW teams in the Continental Tire Sports Car Challenge (CTSCC) could hardly have hoped for a more successful opening race: At the "Daytona International Speedway", Shelby Blackstock (US) and Ashley Freiberg (US) won the BMW Performance 200, driving a Fall-Line Motorsports BMW M3. They were followed by three more BMW cars, among them in second the other Fall-Line BMW M3, driven by BMW Team RLL's John Edwards (US) and Trent Hindman (US). Freiberg is the first woman in the history of the series to claim an overall win. For Blackstock, son of US singer and actor Reba McEntire (US), it was also his maiden CTSCC win. Turner Motorsport's number 96 BMW M3 had crossed the line as the winner, but was then excluded from the race due to a technical infringement. BMW also celebrated a one-two in the Street Tuner category. Jeff Mosing (US) and Eric Foss (US) scored their maiden win in Murillo Racing's BMW 328i. Greg Liefooghe (US) and Tyler Cooke (US) finished second in their BimmerWorld Racing BMW 328i.



BMW DTM teams test in Portimão.

The first DTM race of the year in Hockenheim (DE) is also fast approaching. Five drivers were in action this week, as BMW Motorsport continued its preparations with a series of tests in the south of Portugal. Over the course of three days, Bruno Spengler (CA), Martin Tomczyk (DE), Marco Wittmann (DE), António Félix da Costa (PT) and Joey Hand completed over 3,000 kilometres at the “Autódromo Internacional do Algarve” near Portimão (PT). Together with the engineers, they worked on various aspects, including fine-tuning chassis components for the new BMW M4 DTM, and completed cooling tests. Unsettled weather conditions restricted the amount of testing they were able to do on the first two days, but the drivers took to the track in the sunshine on Thursday. For both Tomczyk (BMW Team Schnitzer) and Wittmann (BMW Team RMG), this was the first outing with their new teams for the 2014 season. The test also provided DTM rookie Félix da Costa with the opportunity to familiarise himself with the car, as well as procedures such as starts and pit stops in various track conditions.

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