

Press Release – 4 June 2012 / No 39

Dominik Schwager: “We see ourselves as contenders for the ADAC GT Masters title”

- BMW driver celebrating successful start to season
- Has already shared two podiums with team-mate Claudia Hürtgen
- Started from pole at Sachsenring in 2011 FIA GT1 world championship

Dominik Schwager (35, Munich) has staged an impressive comeback in this year’s ADAC GT Masters. Having returned to the Super Sports Car League after a three-year absence, the three-time ADAC GT Masters race winner has already secured two podium finishes in four races alongside Claudia Hürtgen (40, Aachen) with whom he shares the cockpit of the Schubert Motorsport BMW Z4 GT3. Ahead of the Sachsenring weekend (8th - 10th June), Schwager reveals his target for the 2012 season and analyses the strengths and weaknesses of the BMW Z4.

You have spent the last couple of years contesting the FIA GT1 world championship, so how come you’re now back in the ADAC GT Masters?

“There has been speculation about the long-term prospects for the FIA GT1 world championship for some time now, so I have been looking around for alternatives. Last autumn, I drove in a race for Schubert Motorsport with a view to the 2012 season. We had been in contact for some time, and we shared the ambition of putting together a package that would make us genuine contenders for the ADAC GT Masters title.”

Are you satisfied with your results from the first four races of the season?

“Yes and no. We are pleased to have finished two races on the podium, even though we feel that victory in the second race at Zandvoort was there for the taking. But ultimately, we simply didn’t have the speed necessary for the win. Also, we were the beneficiaries of the retirement by Lunardi and Martin, because there is no way that we could have beaten their BMW ALPINA on our own merits. Much worse, though, was the incident in the first race at Zandvoort, when we were rear-ended by another driver on the formation lap. That was very costly in terms of points.”

The BMW Z4 was very fast during the first two weekends. Where do you see the strengths of the Z4?

“The BMW has excellent aerodynamics; it’s as if the car was designed for the smooth-flowing and medium fast sections of the track. But it is also a feature of the basic design that we have difficulty in accelerating out of slow corners. Because, unlike the competition who generally have high-capacity engines, we are a bit short on torque. It has to be said, though, that BMW have made progress with regard to their engines for the 2012 season – the V8 in the Z4 is very good.”

Oschersleben
30/03/12 – 01/04/12

Zandvoort (NL)
04/05/12 – 06/05/12

Sachsenring
08/06/12 – 10/06/12

Nürburgring *
13/07/12 – 15/07/12

Red Bull Ring (A)
10/08/12 – 12/08/12

Lausitzring
24/08/12 – 26/08/12

Nürburgring
14/09/12 – 16/09/12

Hockenheim
28/09/12 – 30/09/12

* same weekend as
ADAC Truck Grand Prix



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Your team-mate Claudia Hürtgen is into her third season behind the wheel of a BMW Z4 and has been with Schubert Motorsport for quite a while now. Do you feel that you can still learn something from her?

“You never stop learning, and we are working very productively together. She knows the team well and is certainly one of the best team-mates that you could wish for. I think that she has been underrated for a long time, because her results have suffered from being paired up with weaker co-drivers. In the ADAC GT Masters, you need a team-mate who can deliver in terms of speed. We did a lot of work in the run-up to the season to ensure that we had the basis of a flourishing partnership. We’ve known each other for ages, and we’ve both been in this business long enough to know what it’s all about. In the ADAC GT Masters, you’re only as strong as your team. Without a capable team-mate and a fully committed crew, you simply won’t get the results.”

After showing just how fast the BMW Z4 could be at Zandvoort, you must be feeling reasonably confident about the race at the Sachsenring?

“I’m still somewhat unsure. We should be good on some sections but not that good on others. It depends very much on the chassis tuning. If we can get a good setup for the slow sections, we should be able to score some useful points at the Sachsenring. Whatever happens, it’s going to be an exciting weekend.”

All 16 races in the ADAC GT Masters are broadcast live on *kabel eins* free-to-air TV channel. Viewers in Germany, Austria and Switzerland can tune in at 12.15pm on Saturday and Sunday. The specialist channel SPORT1 will be broadcasting highlights of the ADAC GT Masters at the Sachsenring in the ADAC Masters Weekend Magazine on 16th June at 11.45am. For continuous updates on completed laps and times during free practice and races, check out the Live Timing page at www.adac.de/motorsport.

ADAC GT Masters website press section: You can access the new (temporary) press section by clicking on ‘Presse’ in the top menu bar of the ADAC GT Masters website. Then log on using your previous details.

Further information available at www.adac.de/motorsport and www.adac-gt-masters.de

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