



Media Information

IMSA WeatherTech SportsCar Championship

5<sup>th</sup> April 2017

**BMW Team RLL returns to the streets of Long Beach.**

- **Successful history for BMW at the Long Beach street race.**
- **BMW Team RLL scored three victories to date at this track.**
- **First sprint race of the 2017 IMSA season.**

**Munich. The Long Beach (USA) street circuit has been the site of many BMW Team RLL successes since the team's first season racing for BMW in 2009. The team has finished the IMSA WeatherTech SportsCar Championship race with at least one BMW on the podium every year except last season. The Bobby Rahal-led team has won the street race three times: once with the BMW M3 in 2011 and twice with the BMW Z4, in 2013 and 2015. Last year, Bill Auberlen (USA) qualified the new BMW M6 GTLM racer on the class pole position, but finished a disappointing fifth after multiple contact with competitors ended another podium opportunity.**

The Long Beach street course is only 1.968 miles long and the race is the shortest of the season at 100 minutes. Far different from the season's opening 24 Hours of Daytona (USA) and 12 Hours of Sebring (USA) endurance events, success is often dictated by how the caution periods fall and how a team executes the planned race pit stop and driver change.

To date in 2017, the team has scored a season's best sixth place finish at the 12 Hours of Sebring. At Long Beach the full-season drivers will share their cars with Auberlen and Alexander Sims (GBR) in the number 25 BMW M6 GTLM. John Edwards (USA) and Martin Tomczyk (GER) will drive the number 24 car.

The GTLM class Balance of Performance was adjusted by IMSA following Sebring and the BMW M6 GTLM will benefit from an increase in boost in the rev range from 2,000 to 7,250 rpm. The fuel tank volume was also increased by 3 litres to total 108 litres of E20 fuel.





**Bobby Rahal (Team Principal, BMW Team RLL):** “It’s been a challenging year. But if you look back at how we did at Long Beach last year being on pole with Bill, with the car in its third race at that stage, the race was very positive for us. I would like to think that we can repeat the performance there. If you look at our history at Long Beach, it’s pretty successful with BMW Team RLL having won three times and earned a number of podiums beyond that. Last year was the only year of eight that one of our cars didn’t finish on the podium so we go there with a positive outlook based on past performance from both BMW and the team.”

**Bill Auberlen (No. 25 BMW M6 GTLM):** “Long Beach is the highlight sprint race of the year. I always look forward to the weekend for two main reasons. First, it’s my home track and, secondly, I’ve won twice in the last few years. Last year, I qualified on the pole, setting a new lap record in the BMW M6 GTLM. This year I hope for a repeat of that, but also to be standing on the top step of the podium at the end of the race.”

**Alexander Sims (No. 25 BMW M6 GTLM):** “I am thoroughly looking forward to the Long Beach weekend. It will be my first time there and having watched the onboard videos, the circuit looks to be a brilliant challenge. I’ve been enjoying working with the team and am just looking forward to getting to Long Beach and trying to exploit all we can from our BMW M6 GTLM.”

**John Edwards (No. 24 BMW M6 GTLM):** “I always enjoy racing at Long Beach because it’s the only street circuit we go to in the GTLM season. The walls are closer and consequences are higher, but we can feel the fan support more on a street circuit, even as we walk to the pit lane to get ready for every session. I’m also looking forward to the first sprint race of the season, as the intensity is higher and mistakes are more costly when we only have one pit stop in a 100 minute race.”

**Martin Tomczyk (No. 24 BMW M6 GTLM):** “It is always exciting to race on a street circuit. Long Beach will be my first in the States. I know the nine-hour time difference between my home in Germany and California will not make it easy, but I am up for the challenge. After two disappointing races at Daytona and Sebring we are ready to prove the performance of our BMW M6 GTLM.”





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