

BMW TEAM RLL: LAGUNA SECA PREVIEW



Woodcliff Lake, N.J. – September 14, 2011... With seven of nine races totaling more than 26 hours of hard fought competition in this season's 2011 American Le Mans Series now complete, BMW Team RLL heads to Laguna Seca Raceway for this weekend's American Le Mans Monterey six-hour sports car race. The team won the first three events and has finished on the podium in every race thereafter to lead all GT championships, but the defense of its 2010 Manufacturer and Team titles begins in earnest at the classic Northern California 2.238-mile, 11-turn road course and the penultimate round of the

championship. Joey Hand and Dirk Müller, in the No. 56 M3 GT, have led the Driver standings since their victory at the season-opening 12 Hours of Sebring (shared with Andy Priaulx) and did finish second in last year's race at Laguna Seca. As season progresses, the competition is getting more intense. With five extra points available at this race and 10 extra at the season-ending Petit Le Mans, their 25 point lead is not yet enough to secure the team's first Driver's title.

Teammates Bill Auberlen and Dirk Werner, in the No. 55 M3 GT, stand third in GT driver standings – now 11 points from second – after feeling more than simply the heat of the competition at the Baltimore Grand Prix. The resulting contact from a overly optimistic pass attempt by a competitor took Auberlen out of the lead and a probable victory in the closing laps of the race. Auberlen was able to salvage a fifth-place finish at the new street circuit, but it ended the duo's streak of three consecutive podium finishes. "Everyone involved with BMW Team RLL knows what is on the line for us at Laguna Seca," said **Bobby Rahal, Team Principal**. "We have had a great season so far and lead all three GT championships, but it could all go for naught if we don't put up a good result at Laguna Seca. The track is always been one of my favorites, and we feel that we should have a good car there, but it is a long race and anything can happen. If we can minimize our mistakes, we are confident in our ability to have a good weekend!" **Bill Auberlen, driver No. 55 M3 GT** – "Baltimore proved to be an awesome street circuit in which Dirk and I experienced the highest of highs and lowest of lows. We started on the pole and the race went really well, with excellent pitstops putting us into the overall lead. That hit by a competitor ended any chance to capitalize, but that is behind us now. I think Laguna Seca will be just what we need. The BMW M3 GT is well suited for this high speed track and a six-hour race should give us an extra advantage with the team's ability to combine excellent strategy and fast pit stops." **Dirk Werner, driver No. 55 M3 GT** – "I am really looking forward to Laguna Seca. This is one of the greatest circuits we race this year. Of course everybody knows the famous 'Corkscrew', but this track offers a lot more. I think that we will be very competitive there – like at all other races this year. So far, our car was always well prepared and really fast. This is a 6hour-race which means that you have to change your approach slightly. The qualifying will not be that important. But of course we will try to continue the streak and fight for pole position. In the race itself it will be crucial not to risk too much in the early stages, in order to still be in the position to fight for victory in the finish. And it is important that the car is still quick when it gets dark and cooler in the last stage of the race."

Joey Hand, driver No. 56 M3 GT – "Laguna Seca is my home race so my family and many friends will be trackside rooting me on. Even though I have not won there, Laguna Seca has been good to me in past years with many poles and second place finishes. The track is known for the





Corkscrew, but I love the fast, downhill turn 9 and 10 combination. The placement of the car is critical because one small mistake can mean big trouble, but you can gain some time there and have fun too. Dirk and I were very strong at Laguna last year and finished second. I am looking forward to this trip with our goal to remain on the podium and collect more points toward the championship.” **Dirk Müller, driver No. 56 M3 GT** – “I don’t think about title calculations, but think from race to race as I have the whole season. Of course we did not risk too much in the last races, because our highest priority was to bring the car to the finish and get good points. We still are facing two long races with a total of 55 points to win. So everything is still possible and we need to stay focused. Last year we were pretty strong at Laguna Seca and we bring important information from last year as a base for our work. We should be very competitive. Of course we want to win, that is why we are going there. The team prepared everything very well and is extremely motivated. In thinking of the championship it is crucial to not make any mistakes and bring the car home safe after six hours.” Following a test session on Thursday, practice and qualifying for the American Le Mans Monterey will be held on Friday, Sept. 16. The six-hour race is scheduled to take the green flag at 1:30 p.m. PT Saturday, Sept. 17. The race will be broadcast live on ESPN3.com and rebroadcast on ESPN2 at 1:00 p.m. ET on Sunday, Sept 18.

About BMW Team RLL:

BMW Group In America BMW of North America, LLC has been present in the United States since 1975. The BMW Group in the United States has grown to include marketing, sales, and financial service organizations for the BMW brand of motor vehicles, including motorcycles, the MINI brand, and the Rolls-Royce brand of Motor Cars; DesignworksUSA, a strategic design consultancy in California; a technology office in Silicon Valley and various other operations throughout the country. BMW Manufacturing Co., LLC in South Carolina is part of BMW Group’s global manufacturing network and is the exclusive manufacturing plant for all X5 and X3 Sports Activity Vehicles and X6 Sports Activity Coupes. The BMW Group sales organization is represented in the U.S. through networks of 338 BMW passenger car and BMW Sports Activity Vehicle centers, 138 BMW motorcycle retailers, 105 MINI passenger car dealers, and 30 Rolls-Royce Motor Car dealers. BMW (US) Holding Corp., the BMW Group’s sales headquarters for North America, is located in Woodcliff Lake, New Jersey.

Rahal Letterman Lanigan Racing BMW’s partner, Rahal Letterman Lanigan Racing, based in Hilliard, Ohio and co-owned by three-time IndyCar Champion and 1986 Indianapolis 500 winner Bobby Rahal, Mi-Jack co-owner Mike Lanigan and CBS LATE SHOW host David Letterman, has been competing for nearly two decades, compiling 22 victories, 31 poles and two series championships (1992, 2010) as well as claiming an Indianapolis 500 victory (Buddy Rice Parts in 2004). In 2009 the team joined BMW of North America to campaign the new BMW M3 in the American Le Mans Series, and in 2010 won both the Manufacturer and Team Championships in the GT category.

Journalist note: Information about the BMW and its products is available to journalists on-line at www.bmwusanews.com.

Video interviews and on-board clips are available at www.youtube.com/BMWNAMotorsport.

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