

# **THE ALLEY**

BMW 2017



## **BMW TEAM RLL'S M6 ROAD RACER**

BMW'S IMSA CHAMPIONSHIP CHASER



John Edwards is flying high. The BMW Team RLL racing driver is gaining altitude both literally and figuratively. Hard to believe that he is already in his fifth season as a BMW of North America contracted driver.

Now at age 26 years, the youngster who once held the FIA record for the youngest license holder and scored his first Skip Barber Racing victory at age 12, has been a winner everywhere he's been.

Edwards has won championships in karting, Formula Mazda and the IMSA support series, and has wins for BMW Team RLL at Mazda Raceway Laguna Seca and Lime Rock Park.

### **JOHN EDDIE AIR**

Born in Louisville, Edwards now splits his time between Charlotte, North Carolina and Jackson Hole, Wyoming.

Before and after most races, tests, appearances and meetings you will find him at the controls of his Cirrus RS22 airplane.

"As a race car driver coming up, I've spent way too much time on commercial planes, but I was always fascinated with take offs and landings, sitting over the wings, watching the flaps work and I

knew that one day I wanted to fly myself," said Edwards.

"So for my birthday one year, my dad and mom got me an introductory to flying gift certificate and I took my first flight with an instructor in Hawaii. I flew by the mountains, across some islands and I was immediately hooked.

"The more I flew and looked at our race schedule, I realized this was something I could actually use to get to races and so I combined my need to travel with my passion for flying.

"I flew for about a year after I got my license, just visual stuff and then decided I was going to get my instrument rating and start flying to races. I bought a Cirrus and it has really changed the way I travel. We take off from my local airport in Concord, N.C. and in about 3 hours, I arrive at Sebring right next to the race track.

"I bought it in March, 2016, and have already put about 250 hours on the plane, so I'm really getting some good use out of it and my dad is getting some good use out of it as well."

### **ON THE GROUND**

On the track, Edwards is aboard the No. 24 BMW M6 GTLM in the IMSA

WeatherTech SportsCar Championship. Edwards hopes to claim some serious hardware to carry on for his flights home.

"BMW is putting a lot of effort into the program," said Edwards.

"This year we have a new car, some new teammates, my co-driver Martin Tomczyk and Bill's new co-driver Alexander Sims. This is my fifth year with BMW and having veterans with so much experience with BMW and Europe, I can always take opportunities to learn from them."

# **JOHN EDWARDS RISING FAST**

**"JOHN IS GOOD, HE'S QUICK AND INTELLIGENT. HE IS CERTAINLY MUCH CALMER IN THE CAR THAN I WAS AT HIS AGE."**

**BOBBY RAHAL**



## **ROLE REVERSAL**

There is a bit of a role reversal in the cards for Edwards in 2017 as he welcomes former DTM champion Martin Tomczyk as his new BMW Team RLL co-driver.

In addition to the DTM, Tomczyk, age 35, of Rosenheim, Germany, is a veteran of the Nurburgring and Spa 24 Hour races.

"This year is a different position for me," said Edwards.

"Instead of the other guys showing me around, now, I'm showing him around a little bit.

"This is Martin's first year in the WeatherTech Championship. He has never been to these tracks

before; the tracks are all new to him. I'm trying to help be the tour guide, and show where things are and the way around some of the tracks.

"He knows the BMW way and is a very quick study."

## **EDWARDS ON THE M6 GTLM FAVORITE CIRCUITS**

"I like dealing with traffic and mixing it up with the GT cars," said Edwards.

"It's not just driving the same lap over and over. You are catching up with someone and maybe making the pass. It is a cool part of endurance racing to me.

"Watkins Glen is my favorite circuit. It has elevation changes, long duration corners, very high speeds and a nice flow. Our M6 should be good there. It's a big car and we have to work hard in low speed corners.

"I've driven the European BMW M6 GT3 on the higher speed places like the Nurburgring Nordschleife. It gets through the higher speed, longer corners really well.

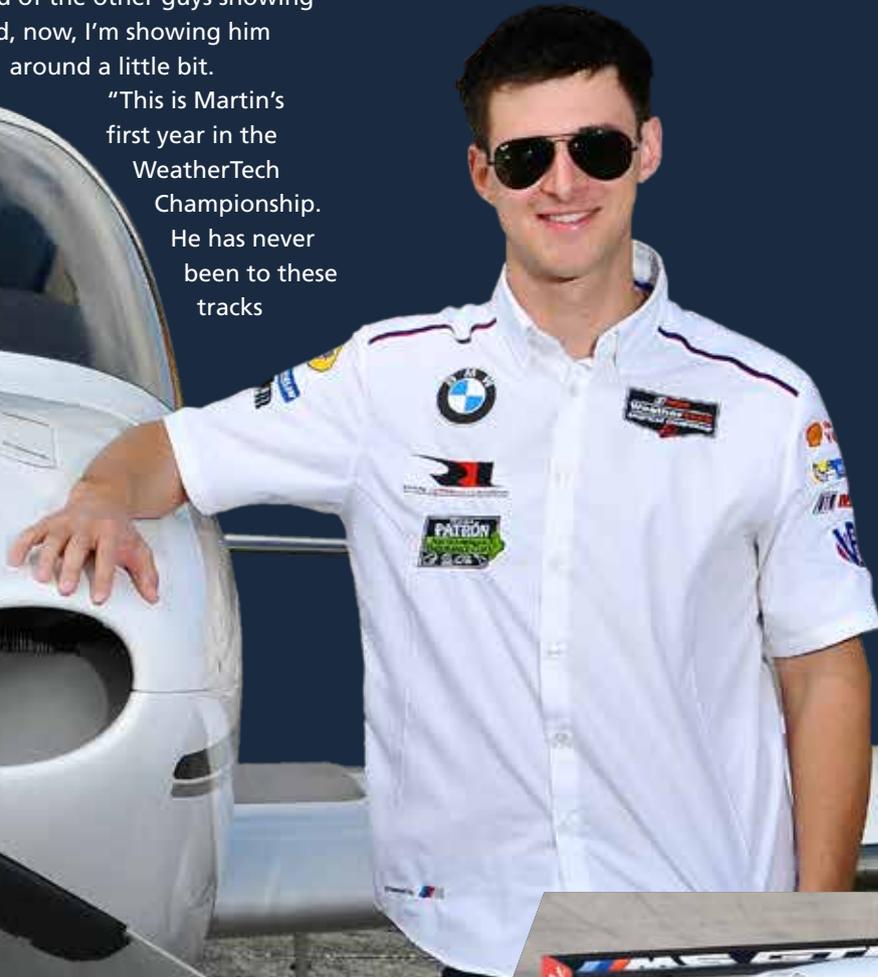
"I think that we should go well at Watkins Glen and at Canadian Tire Motorsport Park (Mosport) we should shine."

## **EDWARDS ON TEAMMATE BILL AUBERLEN**

"Bill is great," said Edwards.

"When I grow up, I want to be Bill Auberlen. He's been with BMW for more than 20 years. He has more wins for BMW than anyone.

"I've never been a co-driver with him, but we've been teammates for five years now."





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# BEING BILL AUBERLEN

Having started and won more major races for BMW than any driver in the world, Bill Auberlen knows who he is, why he is successful, and how to have fun.

"This is a dream job," said the 48-year old Californian. "To be with BMW, with all of its cutting edge technology and design, and to race is incredible. It's a job where I wake up before the alarm goes off every day."

He has won six professional auto-racing championships, four with BMW power.

He starts the 2017 IMSA WeatherTech SportsCar Championship season having competed in over 500 professional races to date, more than 250 in BMWs.

Auberlen's results include 90+ race victories, 190+ podium finishes, 50+ pole positions, 80+ fastest race laps and 110 records.

He stands second on the all-time North American endurance sports car racing wins list with 53 victories (27 Rolex Series, 5 ALMS, 19 IMSA GT, 2 SCCA USRRC).

Now in his ninth season with the factory backed BMW Team RLL, the Redondo Beach, California native, now residing in Palos Verdes Peninsula, was aboard for the first wins for the BMW M3 GT, the BMW Z4 GTE and the current BMW M6 GTLM.

## WHAT MAKES BMW SPECIAL?

"After 22 years driving amazing race cars with BMW, I have come to fully recognize the commitment and passion at the BMW factory that everyone has for design and engineering," said Auberlen.

"From a driver's standpoint, every BMW on the street is a GREAT performance vehicle. I just follow the BMW roundel. It's been such a good opportunity to be with





great teams and drive. I believe in BMW and I trust the team and my co-drivers. After all these years I know the Roundel will take you to victory lane.”

### **AWAY FROM THE TRACK**

While his fellow American teammate John Edwards takes to the skies away from the track, BMW legend Bill Auberlen heads for the water.

“Before I raced with BMW, I had my own team,” said Auberlen.

“I’m such a gearhead that I love trying to design and engineer things, but BMW won’t let me touch the (race) car anymore.

“I needed to find a way to channel my energy and creativity, so I have a boat. We design and manufacturer our own X Power Drive outrides.

“It’s a 32-foot boat that runs over 190 miles per hour. We have twin 1,300 horsepower engines running on 91 octane pump gas. It’s fast!

“At one point, my biggest problem was just getting the boat and trailer to the lake without blowing tires!

“Thankfully that changed as soon as we got with Michelin, they helped me switch to their tires and solve that problem.”

### **ON CO-DRIVER ALEXANDER SIMS**

“BMW has a roster of world class drivers. They are all fast and smart and that is certainly the case with my new co-driver, Alexander Sims,” said Auberlen.

This is the fourth season as a BMW works driver for Sims, now age 29. The Londoner is a winner of the 2016 Spa 24 Hour

race, a former McLaren Autosport BRDC Young Driver Award winner and has worked his way from karting championships through Formula 3, GP3, LMP2, Blancpain Endurance Series and the British GT championship.

“Alex has never raced in America, so every track is new to him,” said Auberlen.

“When we’ve had new drivers on the team in the past, year one here is always a challenge.

“I’ve been in the position several times through the years where we have a new driver on the team.

“My job is to help him get up to speed and try to teach him all the little things that I can.

“I try to share my experience at each track. These are places where you can pass. Here is the set-up, here are the track factors, here is what to expect.”

### **ON FELLOW AMERICAN BMW TEAMMATE, JOHN EDWARDS**

“John and I have been teammates for the past few years, but haven’t had a chance to co-drive together,” said Auberlen.

“We were slated to drive together in 2016, but when we got to Daytona, the team lined up all of the drivers and put him in the “tall” car instead.

“He (John) is pretty close to perfect. He is super quick, never makes mistakes, and he’s fun to hang out with. It’s like the trifecta.

“In a few more years, as his experience keeps growing, nothing will stop him from taking every record in the business.”

And that would make him the next Bill Auberlen.

# ELECTRIFYING PERFORMANCE



One of the fastest growing championships on the international motorsport scene is the FIA Formula E Championship and given its innovative technologies and competitive spirit it is no surprise that BMW is a major player there.

“Since its inaugural season, Formula E has enjoyed rapid development and is now regarded as a high-level racing series,” said BMW motorsport director Jens Marquardt.

“The FIA Formula E Championship will allow BMW to forge new paths and demonstrate our expertise in the field of electric mobility.”

Formula E will hold three events in North America during the 2016/17 series’ season, Mexico City (April 1), New York (July 15-16) and Montreal (July 29-30).

BMW Motorsport is involved in the FIA Formula E Championship through its backing of the MS Amlin Andretti team.

This partnership with Andretti has been extremely positive and provides a close exchange of ideas between the engineers at BMW and Andretti. As part of the commitment, BMW Motorsport provided its works driver Antonio Felix da Costa to the team.

Recently, BMW was among nine manufacturers accepted by the FIA to become powertrain providers for seasons five (2018/19), six (2019/20) and seven (2020/21) in Formula E.

While Formula E teams were required to use the same vehicles in the first seasons, they are now allowed to modify the electric motors, inverter, and transmission.

Approved manufacturers with teams in the 2018/19 season will be able to tweak their vehicles and it will not be only about the drivers and race management anymore.

The homologations mean that these powertrains will be synchronized with the new chassis and battery for season give which are to be provided by Spark Technologies and McLaren Applied Technologies. Besides BMW, FIA has approved the following manufacturers: ABT Formel E, DS Automobiles, Jaguar Land Rover, Mahindra Racing, NextEV NIO, Penske Autosport, Renault and Venturi Automobiles. Michelin is the exclusive tire supplier for the championship.

FIA President, Jean Todt said: “The homologation of the powertrains is a very significant step because it means the cars will be able to run for twice as long while, at the very least, maintaining the same performance level.”

BMW i vehicles have been used in Formula E since the first season as the “official vehicle partner” for the series. BMW’s hybrid i8 supercar has served as the Formula E safety car and the electric BMW i3 is used as the medical car and as the Race Director car.

In addition, the BMW X5 xDrive40e is the Formula E support car, acting as the rescue and extrication vehicle.

