

= BMW M1 Procar Championship =

For the later German touring car series , see ADAC Procar Series .

The BMW M1 Procar Championship , sometimes known simply as Procar , was a one @-@ make auto racing series created by Jochen Neerpasch , head of BMW Motorsport GmbH , the racing division of automobile manufacturer BMW . The series pitted professional drivers from the Formula One World Championship , World Sportscar Championship , European Touring Car Championship , and other international series against one another using identically modified BMW M1 sports cars .

Billed as an opportunity to see a mix of drivers from various motorsport disciplines , the championship served as support races for various European rounds of the 1979 Formula One season , with Formula One drivers earning automatic entry into the Procar event based on their performance in their Formula One cars . Austrian Niki Lauda won the inaugural championship . In 1980 , the series held some events outside of Formula One schedule , and was won by Brazilian Nelson Piquet . BMW chose not to continue the championship in 1981 to concentrate on their entrance into Formula One .

= = Origin = =

Jochen Neerpasch , the head of BMW 's Motorsports division , was the first to propose the idea of a one @-@ make championship . The division had started construction of the first sports car for BMW in 1978 , the M1 , and had planned from the start to enter the new sports car in the World Sportscar Championship in 1979 , as well as offering the cars to customers for other series . BMW Motorsport planned to build M1s to meet regulations known as Group 5 , but a rule change instituted by the Fédération Internationale du Sport Automobile ( FISA ) in 1977 altered the requirements for Group 5 . The new regulations required a minimum of 400 examples of the M1 to be built to meet Group 4 regulations before the car could be further homologated for the Group 5 category .

Development of the Group 4 racing car was already under way at the time of the regulation change . Neerpasch believed that rather than delaying their racing program until 400 road cars had been built , racing cars could be built at the same time since they too counted toward the 400 example minimum . A one @-@ make series consisting of the M1 racing cars intended for Group 4 was devised by Neerpasch since the racing cars could not yet legally compete elsewhere , while at the same time allowing BMW to develop the race cars through experience .

To attract drivers to the series , Neerpasch entered into discussions with Max Mosley . Mosley was the head of March Engineering , a constructor which BMW was partnered with in their factory efforts in the European Formula Two Championship . Mosley was at the time a member of the Formula One Constructors Association , and was able to use his position to convince other Formula One constructors to support the use of Neerpasch 's one @-@ make series as a support race for European Formula One events . A ruling and organisation body for the series , known as The Procar Association , was set up by BMW and approved by FISA .

= = Format = =

With the Procar Championship announced in spring 1978 at the official unveiling of the M1 road car , Neerpasch and the newly formed Procar Association laid out regulations for the 1979 season . Races were planned for the middle of the Formula One season , when the championship remained in Europe for several months . Practice and qualifying were held on Friday of the race weekend , while the race itself occurred on Saturday . The winner of each race received US \$ 5 @,@ 000 , second place received \$ 3 @,@ 000 , and third place \$ 1 @,@ 000 . Races varied in length , but each lasted for approximately half an hour .

To attract Formula One drivers to the championship , seats were guaranteed in the Procar races by cars which were entered by the factory BMW team . The five fastest Formula One drivers from Friday practice were assigned to the factory team , and were even guaranteed the first five grid positions for the Procar race , regardless of their qualifying times in the cars . This not only

guaranteed Formula One driver participation , but also allowed for a variety of drivers to be seen over the course of the season . However , because the series ran Goodyear tyres , several Formula One drivers were not allowed to compete due to contractual obligations with competing tyre manufacturer Michelin . As Scuderia Ferrari and Renault were selling roadcars themselves , they did not allow their Formula One drivers to participate and implicitly endorse BMW .

Other teams were allowed to participate , assigning a variety of sportscar and touring car drivers as well as Formula One drivers who had not earned spots in the factory cars . Points were awarded to the top ten finishers , starting with 20 points and decreasing down to 15 , 12 , 10 , 8 , 6 , 4 , 3 , 2 , and finally 1 for the nine remaining drivers . An overall championship was awarded to the driver who had accumulated the most points at the end of the season . A new M1 road car was awarded to the championship winner .

== Cars ==

All cars used in the Procar Championship were built to identical standards , although their origins varied . BS Fabrications constructed five cars for the BMW factory team , while cars for other competitors were constructed by the British Formula Two team Project Four Racing ( led by Ron Dennis ) and the Italian constructor Osella . The racing cars , designed to meet Group 4 technical regulations , shared only some basics from the M1 road cars .

For the M1 's exterior , simple modifications were made to adapt the car aerodynamically . A deep spoiler was added under the nose of the car , while an adjustable wing was added on two mounts at the rear of the engine cover . The arches for the wheels were extended outward to shroud the wider 28 centimetres ( 11 in ) wheels in the front , and 32 cm ( 12 @. @ 6 in ) wheels at the rear . The alloy wheels , designed by Campagnolo , featured a central locking nut and mimicked the straked design of the production car 's wheels . Inside , the car featured no finishing or luxuries from the road car , only a rollcage for driver protection . The glass windows were replaced with clear plastic .

Mechanically , the Procar M1s were extensively modified to meet the requirements of circuit racing . The standard M1 featured the cast iron block BMW M88 straight @-@ 6 with 3 @, @ 453 cubic centimetres ( 210 @. @ 7 cu in ) displacement . Modified into the M88 / 1 by a team led by Paul Rosche , it was capable of producing 470 horsepower at 9000 rpm , compared to 277 hp from the standard M1 's engine . The 5 @-@ speed ZF gearbox housing from the road car was retained , but with multiple gear ratios allowed , as well as its own oil cooler .

The suspension was entirely new , adding adjustable anti @-@ roll bars . The brakes were redesigned to adapt the use of a driver @-@ adjustable brake pressure balance , while the servo @-@ activated braking system was removed . A racing steering rack was used in place of the standard power steering unit . Pneumatic jacks were later added to the cars in the 1980 season to allow for quicker pit stops . Goodyear racing tires were used on all cars . All other non @-@ essential items from the road car were not included , bringing the Procar M1 's weight down to 1 @, @ 020 kilograms ( 2 @, @ 250 lb ) . The performance of the Procar M1s was increased to a top speed of 311 kilometres per hour ( 193 mph ) dependent upon gear ratios , and acceleration from 0 ? 100 km / h ( 62 mph ) in 4 @. @ 3 seconds . Each Procar M1 cost approximately US \$ 60 @, @ 000 .

== Series history ==

== 1979 season ==

An announced schedule for the inaugural season of the Procar Championship featured events taking place from May to September , when the Formula One World Championship ran eight consecutive Grands Prix in Europe . A ninth event was scheduled at Donington Park as part of the Gunnar Nilsson Memorial Trophy , a charity event for the Gunnar Nilsson Cancer Fund , although it did not award points towards the overall championship .

Different Formula One drivers earned spots on the factory team over the season based on their performance in Formula One practice . These included Mario Andretti , Patrick Depailler , Emerson Fittipaldi , James Hunt , Jean @-@ Pierre Jarier , Alan Jones , Jacques Laffite , Niki Lauda , Nelson Piquet , Didier Pironi , Clay Regazzoni , and John Watson . Teo Fabi , Tiff Needell , Hans @-@ Georg Bürger and Michael Bleekemolen were invited to drive in the factory BMW cars as well although they were not Formula One drivers at the time .

As well as the standard five car entry from BMW , several other notable teams participated . Procar constructor Project Four entered a car for Niki Lauda when he was not in the factory entries , while Osella entered cars for a rotating driver line @-@ up . Touring car teams Tom Walkinshaw Racing , Eggenberger Racing , Ecurie Arvor , and Schnitzer Motorsport entered cars , as did Team Konrad and GS Tuning from sports cars .

===== Race results =====

===== Championship standings =====

The following are the ten highest finishing drivers in the points standings . Niki Lauda won the inaugural championship , initially earning a spot in the factory BMW team in the first round , before running the remaining seven races for Project Four .

===== 1980 season =====

For the second running of the Procar Championship , the schedule was altered and expanded so that the races did not rely exclusively on Formula One events . This allowed the season to start slightly earlier , this time in April . Donington Park was retained from the previous year but now counted towards the championship . Two German events were added , with the Procar Championship designated as that year 's Avusrennen at the AVUS circuit , and the Procars serving as a support race for the Deutsche Rennsport Meisterschaft 's 200 Miles of Norisring . Six Formula One Grands Prix remained on the schedule .

Unlike the previous year where the fastest drivers in practice earned seats with the factory BMW team , five drivers were designated as the primary drivers for events which did not share a Grand Prix weekend . These five were Alan Jones , Jacques Laffite , Nelson Piquet , Didier Pironi , and Carlos Reutemann . Other Formula One drivers to participate during Grands Prix were Mario Andretti , Derek Daly , Jean @-@ Pierre Jarier , Riccardo Patrese , and Alain Prost .

Several teams from the previous year entered once more , including Project Four , GS Tuning , Eggenberger Racing , Cassani Racing , and Schnitzer Motorsport . Newcomers included personal teams from Arturo Merzario , Dieter Quester , and Helmut Marko , as well as Swiss sportscar manufacturer Sauber .

===== Race results =====

===== Championship standings =====

The following are the ten highest finishing drivers in the points standings . Nelson Piquet won the championship , aided by three consecutive wins to finish the year .

== Afterwards ==

At the start of the 1980 season , BMW announced their intention to enter Formula One as an engine supplier for Brabham . The deal came in part due to Bernie Ecclestone , then head of Brabham , as well as the head of BS Fabrications , who had built several of the Procar M1s . BMW

planned to enter the series in 1982 , and BMW Motorsport was tasked with concentrating their efforts on the new Formula One engines instead of the Procar series .

That same year , BMW officially met FISA 's requirements by having built approximately 400 cars . The M1 was therefore homologated for Group 4 on December 1 , 1980 , allowing BMW to enter the Championship for Makes in 1981 . As BMW shifted towards Formula One , the company ended their plans to enter the Group 5 category after the construction of only two race cars . With BMW no longer needing to quickly build race cars , and with BMW Motorsport shifting to Formula One work , the series was not held in 1981 . The M1s used in the Procar series were sold to various customers for use in the World Championship , as well as smaller series such as the Deutsche Rennsport Meisterschaft and Camel GT Championship .

In 1988 , Motor Racing Developments , the owners of the Brabham Formula One Team , were sold to Alfa Romeo . Wishing to revive the Procar series , Brabham and Alfa Romeo developed a prototype racing car using a mid @-@ mounted Formula One @-@ based V10 engine , covered in a bodywork silhouette mimicking the Alfa Romeo 164 . Alfa Romeo intended to use identical copies of the car for a resurrected Procar series , but the plans never came to fruition and only the prototype was built .

= = = Revival = = =

On June 30 , 2008 , BMW announced plans to revive the Procar series in an exhibition event at the 2008 German Grand Prix at the Hockenheimring . The races involved ten original M1 Procars driven by several drivers who had participated in the original series as well as modern drivers . Each car included a passenger seat for a guest . The line @-@ up included former competitors Christian Danner , Harald Grohs , Niki Lauda , Dieter Quester , and Marc Surer . Former BMW driver Prince Leopold of Bavaria , BMW Sauber test driver Christian Klien , and a current M1 Procar owner , Marco Wagner , also competed . The BMW M1 Art Car designed by Andy Warhol was involved , driven by series founder Jochen Neerpasch and with fellow Art Car artist Frank Stella as his passenger .

Lauda won the first race held on Saturday , July 19 , while Neerpasch was able to win the race held on Sunday , July 20 , the morning of the Grand Prix .