



BMW Motorsport

Golden hat-trick: BMW Brand Ambassador Alessandro Zanardi also wins the world title in the road race at the UCI Para-cycling Road World Championship 2015.

Nottwil (CH), 2nd August 2015. Three competitions, three gold medals and three world titles: at the 2015 UCI Para-cycling Road World Championship in Nottwil (CH), Alessandro Zanardi (IT) celebrated a golden hat-trick. The BMW works driver and BMW Brand Ambassador also won today's road race in the MH5 category (men's hand-cycle). On Wednesday he won the team-relay with the Italian national team, and on Friday he successfully defended his world title in the time-trial. Now, for the second time in his career, he has also been crowned world champion in the road race. His success is even more remarkable as Zanardi contested the 24-hour race at Spa-Francorchamps (BE) in his BMW Z4 GT3 last weekend, while his competitors were in their final preparations for the para-cycling races at Nottwil.

To conclude the world championships at Nottwil, the athletes tackled the 46.5-kilometre road race, completing three laps on the challenging course, which included exhausting uphill and fast downhill sections. The competition turned out to be a real thriller. When Zanardi entered the Nottwil stadium, where the final spurt towards the finish was contested, he was second, closely behind Dutch athlete Jetze Plat. In a nail-biting final sprint the duo fought for the world title with Zanardi crossing the line with a small advantage in front of his rival. In total, he completed the 46.5 kilometres in 1:29:21 hours. Plat finished second, his Dutch countryman Johan Reekers was third.

"The time trial was a great race but today's road race was even better, because until the line it was absolutely unpredictable," said Zanardi. "I did not plan to come into the stadium second, I had planned on entering it in first position. As a matter of fact I planned to cross the last hill leading by myself, but my young competitors are just amazing and it was a fight until the last metre of the climb. Then downhill it was a crazy run towards the end. Afterwards it was clear that it would be decided between me and Jetze. Over the last two kilometres it was a race where you needed to keep a cool head. We both sprinted to take the last corner going into the stadium and he managed to get in front of me. At that point I thought I had lost the race, but then I said to myself: 'Hey Alex, you are a racing driver. Just focus and take advantage of the last opportunity'. This opportunity came up shortly before the last corner. I just went for it, and when he went to move over to get the best line I was there. I had already taken the inside and the race was won. I am really, really happy with the last week. To compete at Spa-Francorchamps with Timo and Bruno, then to come here and win three gold medals – that is just an amazing experience. But now I am looking forward to getting a little bit of rest."

With his three wins at Nottwil, Zanardi now has a total of eight para-cycling world titles to his name. The results of this year's UCI Para-cycling Road World Championship count towards qualifying for the 2016 Paralympic Games in Rio de Janeiro (BR).

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