

# BMW M1 IMSA Group 4

## IMSA GTO 1981 Endurance Race Car



As racing regulations evolved in the mid 1970s, BMW Motorsport saw an opportunity to beat arch-rival Porsche in a new racing series by designing and manufacturing a purpose-built race car and offering a street version for sale to the public, as stipulated by the rules.

The BMW M1, designed by Giorgetto Giugiaro and powered by a Paul Rosche-designed 3.5-liter, twin-cam inline-6 “M88” engine mounted amid-ship, debuted at the 1978 Paris Auto Show to the admiration of the world’s motoring press. However, development and production delays with outside contractors caused its appearance to coincide with the demise of the racing formula for which it was created.

The quick-thinking solution was the fast and furious ProCar Series which supported European Formula 1 races. The series pitted the top-five qualifying Grand Prix starters against 15 talented local drivers in identically prepared M1 race cars. The ProCar Series ran in 1979 and 1980 with championship wins by Niki Lauda and Nelson Piquet, respectively.

BMW Motorsport and BMW of North America saw potential for the M1 to replace the aging 320i Turbo in endurance racing in the USA for 1980-81. As a result, a few M1 ProCars were modified and saw racing action in the US IMSA GTO Series campaigned by BMW NA and privateers. Modifications included an endurance racing fuel system with quick fueling ports within the rear quarter windows and wider rear fender extensions to incorporate wider rear wheels and tires. This M1 IMSA Group 4 was one of two cars campaigned as No. 2 by BMW of North America (with Kenwood sponsorship) at the 24 Hours of Daytona and Mosport during the 1981 season. Its racing action was limited to the endurance races as BMW of North America’s program shifted focus to the new M1/C prototype for the sprint races. Drivers included David Hobbs, Mark Surer, and Dieter Quester.

### General Data

Weight	2866 lbs approx.
Wheelbase	100.8 in
Length	175.7 in
Width	71.8 in

### Engine

Engine type	6-cylinder
Valve linkage	DOHC 24-valve
Bore x stroke	94 x 87 mm
Power/hp	490 approx.

### Drivetrain

Drive system	Mid engine/rear wheel drive
Transmission	ZF 5 – speed transaxle

### Chassis

Front suspension	Double A-arms coil springs/gas shocks
Rear suspension	Double A-arms coil springs/gas shocks
Brake system	4-wheel ventilated discs
Tires	Goodyear or AVON slicks Front: 23.5/10.5 x 16 Rear: 25.5/14.0 x 16