

**MICHELIN IS HOMEWARD BOUND AS MOTOGP HEADS TO LE MANS**

Michelin will see its range of MotoGP™ tyres put through their paces on home soil as the championship heads to France and one of the world's spiritual racing homes at Le Mans for the HJC Helmets Grand Prix de France.

The 4,185m Bugatti Circuit is within the famous 24-hour track and uses a part of that legendary layout in conjunction with a purpose-built facility to create a circuit which features nine right-hand and five left-hand corners over its configuration. The stop-go design of the track makes it less stressful on tyres than some other circuits, with late braking and drivability two determining factors that need to be mastered to give a good lap. Michelin recently visited the circuit for a test to appraise the new asphalt that was laid earlier this year and a positive assessment led to valuable data being collected in preparation for this weekend's event. The one-day test was used to evaluate the best compounds for the new surface and with this information Michelin has brought a series of tyres that will be suited to the track's improved grip levels.

The range for the Le Mans race will feature a soft, medium and hard front and rear MICHELIN Power Slick - as is the case at all races this season. These will all be identified with a white band, no band and yellow band respectively to denote the tyre compound being used. Although the circuit is not particularly hard on the tyres, the new surface provides a greater amount of grip and to cope with this, and the extra right-hand turns, the rear tyres - and the hard front compound - will be an asymmetric design with the right-hand shoulder having a harder compound. The MICHELIN Power Rain tyres in soft (blue band) and medium (no band) will be available for use if conditions dictate, which with the mixed weather that has struck MotoGP this season, and the expected climate at Le Mans, might very well be used at some point during the weekend.

The famous French circuit has held a motorcycle Grand Prix since 1969, with the modern track being a stable fixture on the calendar since 2000. Situated just on the outskirts on the town of Le Mans, approximately 200km south-west of the country's capital Paris, the circuit always attracts a lively and boisterous crowd that will certainly be taking a keen interest in France's exploits on the track.

Michelin will begin the proceedings for its home race with the rest of the MotoGP paddock on Friday 19th May with two Free Practice sessions, followed by another Free Practice the following morning. Qualifying is on Saturday afternoon to decide grid positions for Sunday's 28-lap race, which is scheduled to get underway at 14.00hrs local time (13.00hrs BST, 12.00hrsGMT/UST).

**Piero Taramasso – Michelin Motorsport Two-Wheel Manager:**

“This is a very important weekend for us as the home Grand Prix always has a special meaning, as well as the added expectation. The French people are very partisan and will certainly be right behind us, so we must perform for them as well as all the Michelin personnel that will be trackside. We had a good test at Le Mans earlier this month to try the new surface and gather as much data as possible about which compounds we will use. This has enabled us to go back to Clermont-Ferrand and prepare a range of tyres that will give optimum performance around this famous circuit. The new asphalt will provide grip in the dry and as we found at the test - because it rained in the morning - it also has very impressive adhesion in the wet, which could prove important as the weather can certainly be changeable at Le Mans.”

