

MICHELIN HEADS HOME AS LE MANS BECKONS

Michelin is making its shortest journey of the year as it heads across its homeland and through the Loire Valley on the way to Le Mans for the fifth round of the MotoGP™ World Championship and the HJC Helmets Grand Prix de France.

Le Mans is one of the most famous racetracks in the world, with its history dating back to the 1920s when the Circuit de la Sarthe was first used to stage four-wheeled racing, but the configuration that is utilised to host the MotoGP race is the Le Mans Bugatti Grand Prix Circuit, which was opened in 1965. It features parts of the famous 24 Heures du Mans circuit in its 4,185m layout and the tight configuration over its nine right and five left corners, many of which are taken in first gear, leads to an emphasis on late braking and hard acceleration and this stop-go character makes the track less stressful on tyres.

Michelin heads to this event buoyed by recent good performances on three circuits that had completely different surfaces than they did last year. This was an issue that faced Michelin 12-months ago as it headed to Le Mans after the track had been resurfaced, but pre-event testing and an impressive range of tyres enabled Michelin to take a new race lap-record and a race duration record, something that it will be looking to repeat this time around. The tyres to tackle the French track are a soft, medium and hard MICHELIN Power Slick for the front, all of which are symmetric in design, whilst the rears - with the matching compounds of soft, medium and hard - will be asymmetric and feature a harder right shoulder to cope with the extra demands that side of the tyre must contend with.

Situated in the Sarthe department of the Pays de la Loire region, Le Mans is approximately 200km south-west of Paris. The circuit can hold more than 100,000 spectators and a huge crowd is expected on race day. Its location also means that wet-weather can be an issue and to cope with such eventualities the MICHELIN Power Rain will be available in a soft and medium compound for both front and rear, with the latter ones featuring an asymmetric design with a harder right-hand side.

Michelin takes to its home track on Friday 18th May for two Free Practice sessions. Qualifying is on Saturday afternoon, which will decide grid positions for Sunday's 27-lap race - Le Mans is one of the races which has had its race length shortened by one-lap this year. The main event is scheduled to get underway at 14.00hrs local time (13.00hrs BST, 12.00hrsGMT/UST) on Sunday 20th May.

Piero Taramasso – Michelin Motorsport Two-Wheel Manager:

“After the last three races, where we have had to prepare for completely new surfaces, it is good to head to a track where we have some knowledge and race experience. Le Mans was resurfaced last year and we were able to test there before the race, so that assisted with the data and we had a very successful weekend, the tyres performed well and we broke a couple of records. That is obviously our target this year and it something very important to Michelin to perform well in front of the home crowd and all the members of the Michelin workforce that will be present. Le Mans is not the most demanding circuit, but it does need a tyre that can give good control and stability at the front under heavy braking, along with drivability out of the slower corners so the riders can put the power down, this is what we have prepared for and the allocation meets those requirements.”

