

MICHELIN RETURNS TO ASIA AND THE 'LAND OF THE RISING SUN'

Michelin's second fly-away race in a five week tour of the Asian-Pacific region sees the MotoGP™ paddock head to Motegi in Japan for the Motul Grand Prix of Japan this weekend with a hope for better weather than that which beset last year's race when all three days were affected by heavy rainfall.

Following a one-weekend break after the inaugural Thailand Grand Prix, Michelin now returns to Asia and Oceania for the three-week back-to-back trip that will include Japan, Australia and Malaysia. First up will be the Japanese leg of the trio tour and a visit to Twin Ring Motegi. The 4,801m circuit has been the home of a motorcycle Grand Prix in Japan since 1999, making this year the 20th consecutive running at a circuit that is one of the most demanding and stressful on tyres on the whole calendar.

With numerous hard braking zones over its layout of six left and eight right-hand bends, the most famous of which is the perfectly-named 90-degree corner. This turn is preceded by a high-speed downhill run into a hard braking right-hander, which puts huge stress on the front and needs a tyre that can give the riders the stability and grip they require as they brake and turn through the corner. The circuit requires huge demands from the tyres due to both its stressful configuration and its abrasive surface, so the range of MICHELIN Power Slicks will have a lot of work to do through the 24-lap race. With all this to consider Michelin will provide a range that is aimed at giving every rider, team and manufacturer a choice to give them the best performance over the weekend and also combat the cooler mornings that can be expected at Motegi at this time of year. With compounds specifically chosen to match the track's demands, the front slicks will be available in soft, medium and hard compounds with a symmetric design, whilst the rear selection - also in soft, medium and hard - will be asymmetric with a harder right-hand-side to cope with the increased turns that go in that direction.

Located approximately three hours' drive north of Tokyo, between the cities of Mito and Utsunomiya and set in area of dense woodland in the northern Kantō region of the Haga District within the Tochigi Prefecture, the Twin Ring Motegi circuit can also be prone to wet weather. This was perfectly demonstrated in 2017 when every session and the race were affected by rain. This deluge provided useful data to Michelin as it was able to further develop the MICHELIN Power Rain tyres following such an intense three-day workout, but the whole paddock will certainly be hoping that this weather anomaly doesn't repeat itself. The range of wet tyres on offer will be a soft and medium option for the front and the rear, the front will be symmetrical, with the rear featuring a harder right-hand-side to give them an asymmetric design.

The first event of the three-week tour will get underway at Motegi on Friday 19th October, when Michelin and the MotoGP field take to the track for the first of two Free Practice sessions. The following day will feature Qualifying, when the riders will battle for the best grid positions for Sunday's 24-lap race. The 16th round of the season will start at 14.00hrs local time (07.00CEST, 06.00BST, 05.00UTC) on Sunday 21st October

Piero Taramasso – Michelin Motorsport Two-Wheel Manager:

"Japan signals the start of the three week back-to-back tour and after being in Thailand just one week ago, this is certainly a very busy part of the season. Motegi is a circuit with some very hard-braking zones, so the riders demand stability from the front tyre to push deep into the corner, but they also need a rear tyre that can put the power down when needed, so we have to supply a range to meet both of these specific demands. Last year we had a full weekend of rain and although we don't want that again, it was very beneficial for Michelin to have such a long period of sustained wet track time, so we could fully assess and analyse the MICHELIN Power Rain tyres, but one weekend was enough, we certainly don't want a repeat!"



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