

Michelin partners Porsche for world endurance racing

Michelin is Porsche's technical partner for the German manufacturer's 2014 endurance racing programme.



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The Clermont-Ferrand-based company played a part in the development of the new Porsche 919 Hybrid by designing specially adapted tyres for the LMP1 class prototype. In compliance with the 2014 sporting regulations for the FIA World Endurance Championship (FIA WEC) and Le Mans, the size of these tyres is 31/71-18, both at the front and the rear.

Developed on a simulator for all of the firm's LMP1 partners, the Michelin tyres on the Porsche 919 Hybrid were refined during testing sessions conducted jointly between the two firms' technical teams, as is explained by Pascal Couasnon, director of Michelin Motorsport: "Michelin was able to support Porsche in the development of its new 919 Hybrid thanks to our extensive expertise in endurance racing. The exchange of information between the engineers at Porsche and Michelin resulted in the best possible synergy between our tyres and the Stuttgart manufacturer's prototype."

A key role

Tyres play a key role both in terms of performance and in the management of the quantity of energy allocated to 2014 FIA WEC competitors by the regulations. The energy efficiency of the LMP1 prototypes depends, amongst other factors, upon two fundamental parameters: their weight and their aerodynamic drag, both of which are significantly influenced by tyres.

Regarding performance, the tyres actively promote the car's efficiency by working in synergy with the suspension. They need to be able to withstand the vehicle's weight as well as its colossal aerodynamic loads, which can reach three times the mass of the car. Around certain circuits and on a dry track, the lateral and longitudinal acceleration generated by these prototypes can appreciably exceed 3G.

It must also be remembered that Michelin's 2014 tyres for LMP1 class prototypes are 15% narrower than before (between 5cm and 6cm narrower). This represents an improvement both in terms of weight (a saving of 8kg per set of four) and

aerodynamic drag. What's more, these benefits are achieved without the need to sacrifice either the performance or durability of the tyre.

Outside of the LMP1 programme, Michelin is also partnering Porsche in the GTE Pro class, in which the Stuttgart firm is continuing to field a brace of Porsche 911 RSRs run by Team Manthey. Having already tasted victory champagne at last year's Le Mans 24 Hours - where Michelin's tyres proved capable of covering three stints - the Franco-German alliance is this year targeting success in the FIA WEC, at Le Mans and in the new Tudor United SportsCar Championship (TUSCC).

"The relationship between Michelin and Porsche is very close and goes far beyond the supply of tyres and associated services in motorsport. Indeed, our two companies have worked hand-in-hand for many years in the design of vehicles that are increasingly safe, reliable and respectful of the environment. This co-operation equally extends into the areas of marketing and after-sales service, through Porsche dealerships worldwide," stated Peter Zabler, the manager in charge of Michelin's partnership with Porsche.

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