

MICHELIN MAKES MOVES TOWARDS MOTEGI

Michelin is on the way to the first of the three back-to-back flyaway races as MotoGP™ heads initially to the Far East for the Motul Grand Prix of Japan at Motegi before travelling to Australia and Malaysia respectively.

The 4,801m Twin Ring Motegi circuit is located in the northern Kantō region of the Haga District within the Tochigi Prefecture, approximately a three-hour drive from the country's capital Tokyo. Situated in vast woodland, the circuit features the road course which will see the MotoGP stars racing on during the weekend and an oval circuit which has been used for American-style motorsport such as NASCAR and CART. Initially constructed in 1997 by Honda as a test facility, the location became a permanent member of the MotoGP calendar in 1999, initially as the Japanese GP, before becoming the Pacific Grand Prix between 2000 and 2003, and then regaining the title of the country's race in 2004.

With demanding braking and hard-acceleration zones over the circuit's undulating configuration throughout its six left and eight right-hand bends, the track is very stressful for the tyres, especially due to its abrasive surface. With all these factors - allied to the lower temperature which can be expected at Motegi at this time of the year - the tyres available need special attention to give the best performance for all riders and machines. The range of three front MICHELIN Power Slicks in soft, medium and hard compounds will be a symmetric design, whilst the rear compositions will be asymmetric with a harder right-hand-side to manage the increased turns which that side of the tyre has to contend with, and the compounds for all tyres have been specifically picked to match the track's demands. Wet weather is always possible in Japan in October and the MICHELIN Power Rain tyres will be in a soft and medium option for the front and an extra soft and soft version for the rear, with all tyres being a symmetrical design.

As the season reaches its climax - with just four rounds to go - the championship is still wide open with the top-five in the title chase covered by just 56-points and with a maximum of 100 still up-for-grabs it looks like being a close finish. The first of the final-four races will get underway at Motegi on Friday 13th October, when Michelin and the MotoGP field take to the track for the first of two Free Practice sessions on that day. Saturday will see Qualifying take place as the riders battle for the best grid positions in readiness for Sunday's 24-lap race. The main event gets underway at 14.00hrs local time (07.00CEST, 06.00BST, 05.00UTC) on Sunday 15th October as the pack will prepare to fire its way to the first corner and push the Michelin tyres to the performance limit in the search for MotoGP glory in the Land of the Rising Sun.

Piero Taramasso – Michelin Motorsport Two-Wheel Manager:

“As we head towards the business end of the season - where the title will be decided - we have one of the biggest tasks we have to undertake all year. The three fly-away races present a massive logistical operation and we have already sent over 70% of the tyres - we will have to allocate - by sea-freight and then the rest we will send by air. It is never easy trying to guess what the conditions will be like, especially in Australia, but we have some good experience from last year and that will make sure we are prepared for most things - unless it snows!

“The first race in Japan is on a track that can create extreme stresses, especially with its hard-braking zones such as 90-degree turn, so we need to have tyres that can cope with these, as well as having good warm-up properties as it can be quite cold at Motegi in the mornings. The track has good grip levels and we will be taking the tyres that we are sure will perform at the best levels and ensure the show is as good as it has been all season so far.”

