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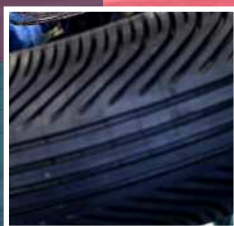
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FOREWORD

In this fifth edition of the 2018 Michelin Webmag series, we should have been looking back at three grands prix, but as it is, we can only talk about two after the race at Silverstone was abandoned due to torrential rain. Quite extraordinary for a circuit not unaccustomed to bad weather, and the finger has been pointed at an inadequate track drainage system... By contrast, the two previous clashes took place in dry conditions and saw the factory Ducati outfit appear on top, with Andrea Dovizioso and Jorge Lorenzo pocketing a victory and a podium finish apiece – joined on the rostrum on both occasions by the relentless Marc Márquez. In recent weeks, these three appear to have stolen a march on their pursuers, with the Honda rider looking increasingly untouchable at the summit of the standings.



WHEN SILVERSTONE FLOODS...

The last time every single race on a grand prix weekend was cancelled was way back in 1980, when snow forced organisers to abandon proceedings in Austria. Thirty-eight years on, it was the promoter of the British Grand Prix who had to admit defeat, this time due to heavy rain – or, more precisely, to problems linked to water gathering in the hollows on the entry to several corners. Overnight efforts to drain the water unfortunately came to nought, and the intense downpours that swept across the UK on Sunday, August 26 ultimately put paid to the 2018 British Grand Prix – much to the disappointment of the riders and all the hardy, weather-beaten spectators who had doggedly stayed the course in the vain hope of a break in the conditions.



August was another very good month for Ducati's factory MotoGP™ team. At Brno, Andrea Dovizioso converted pole position into victory, before reaching the rostrum again a week later with a third-place finish at Spielberg. Team-mate Jorge Lorenzo did even better. After racing to the runner-up spoils in the Czech Republic, the multiple MotoGP™ World Champion triumphed for the third time aboard Ducati's Desmosedici in Austria following a thrilling duel with Marc Márquez. There seems little doubt that had the race at Silverstone not been abandoned due to the rain, Gigi Dall'Igna's two riders may well have continued that impressive run in the British Grand Prix, for which Lorenzo had qualified on pole position with Dovizioso second. *"We've been making consistent progress since the spring," acknowledges the Italian. "Our bike is now a better-balanced package but don't forget that the recent circuits are ones that have played to our strengths. We'll get a clearer idea of where we really stand over the forthcoming races."*

DUCATI'S SUCCESSFUL SUMMER



With testing strictly limited by the sport's regulations, efficiency is the order of the day when it comes to developing new products. This year, Michelin's technicians have been tasked with working on the firm's front tyre for 2019. "In Barcelona, following the Gran Premi de Catalunya, we gave the riders a new profile to test and their feedback was extremely positive," reveals Piero Tarasso. "At Brno, we made a new tyre available to them by combining this profile with a different construction, the objective still being to improve performance as the bike begins to lean and upon corner entry. The majority of the riders reported that this tyre offered better grip, but that it was more difficult to exploit. A number of them complained of vibrations and a lack of feedback. Now, we need to carefully analyse everything to understand if these problems were due to the bike set-ups not having been sufficiently adapted to handle the stiffness of our new structure, or indeed if our proposal was too radical. We have accordingly planned to take a step back at the next test, which is scheduled to take place in Valencia at the end of the season."

NON-STOP DEVELOPMENT



NUMBERS

MÁRQUEZ REACHES MotoGP™ CENTURY



The 2018 Grand Prix České Republiky at Brno was Marc Márquez's 100th start in MotoGP™, making the Spaniard – at the age of just 25 years and 169 days – the second-youngest rider ever to reach this milestone after John Hopkins. Of Márquez's 40 victories in the premier class, 29 have been achieved from pole position.

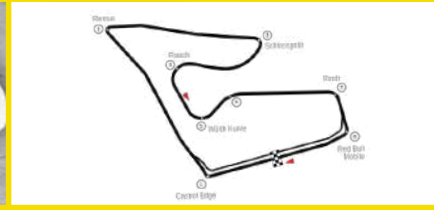
Other notable accomplishments include four world titles, 71 podium finishes and 1,715 points scored. That said, the Honda rider's statistics pale in comparison with those of Yamaha rival Valentino Rossi who, upon passing the 100 GP mark at the age of 27 years and 73 days, could already lay claim to five world crowns, 54 race wins, 82 podiums, 30 pole positions and a total of 1,957 points.



WEAR – THE SCOURGE OF PERFORMANCE

The ideal tyre would be one that doesn't wear but, unfortunately, that tyre does not exist. *"When a tyre is new, it generates optimum temperature and grip,"* explains Piero Taramasso, *"but as the rubber reduces, the temperature and grip do likewise."* Another consequence of tyre wear is a narrowing in the diameter of the wheel, modifying the existing geometry settings and therefore the bike's overall behaviour. This places the emphasis on establishing the best possible set-up and adjusting the mapping in race situations in order to maintain form in the final laps. At the end of a grand prix, a rear tyre that weighed ten kilograms at the start is liable to have lost as much as ten per cent of its initial mass.

STRESSES AND STRAINS



REDBULL RING - SPIELBERG

Of the three circuits that the MotoGP™ riders visited in August, Spielberg in Austria is beyond doubt the most complicated for tyre manufacturers. *“The track layout poses a real challenge,”* reasons Piero Taramasso. *“To begin with, there are two long straights where the rear tyre must withstand intense loads that create extremely high temperatures. Our response is a special construction that is unique to that circuit. What’s more, Spielberg is largely asymmetric, with seven right-hand corners around the lap and only two left-handers. With several heavy-braking zones, the front tyre is subjected to similar stresses and, with the surface generating only average grip levels, riders have a tendency to lock the front wheel under braking.”* All of this makes the Austrian venue a particularly complex one for Michelin’s technicians.





HAFIZH
SYARHIN

“PUSHING BEYOND MY COMFORT ZONE”

In his first year in the championship, Hafizh Syarhin admits he is still a long way from mastering Michelin's MotoGP™ tyres. *“It is a constant learning curve,”* acknowledges the Yamaha Tech 3 rider. *“The characteristics of the tyres are very different to those that I ran on in Moto2. The most complicated aspect for me is taming the front tyre. You need to push beyond your comfort zone in order to find the limits, particularly with the Yamaha benefitting from excellent front suspension. That is its key strength and, if I want to be quick, I need to understand how to get the*

best out of it.” Nicolas Goyon – crew chief to the Malaysian rider, who is currently battling for ‘Rookie of the Year’ honours – fully agrees: *“Hafizh still has some work to do to adjust to the way the front tyre functions. He soon adapted to the excellent grip offered by the rear tyre, but he is not yet exploiting the front tyre sufficiently to make a real difference between the various options that we have available in our allocation, be they slicks or wets. He is still some way from extracting the full potential of the tyres.”*

A RIDER AND HIS TECHNICIAN



He will never forget the way Maverick Viñales' eyes sparkled that day. "It was 2016," recalls Richard Rodrigues, the Michelin technician seconded to Team Suzuki Ecstar. "At the end of the race, when Maverick took off his helmet, his face just lit up – I can still see it now... He was a picture of delight at having given his all throughout. At that moment, it wasn't about the result, but rather the enjoyment he had got from pushing both himself and his bike to the absolute limit lap after lap." While he only spent a single season working alongside Viñales – now a factory Yamaha rider – Richard re-



tains vivid recollections of his collaboration with the Spaniard. "It was a relationship of trust," the Michelin technician recalls. "I always knew where I stood with him. Maverick is a rider who provides good, detailed feedback, while also listening to others. The day he won at Silverstone, I had recommended he use the medium tyre, which not many riders had opted to run in the race. He took my advice and duly claimed his first grand prix victory in MotoGP™. Afterwards, he thanked me in the press conference, which really meant a lot to me."



ALL ASYMMETRIC

In a new development this season, all of Michelin's wet-weather tyres are now asymmetric. *"Previously, we only used them at certain circuits,"* reveals Piero Taramasso, *"whereas now they make up our entire allocation, from extra-soft to soft and medium compounds alike."*

When it rains, the advantages offered by asymmetric tyres cannot be understated.

"Depending on the track, the tyre is softer either on the left or on the right," continues Michelin's MotoGP™ programme manager. *"The fact that they reach peak operating temperature more quickly – a key consideration in the wet – enables the rider to feel confident in their performance right from the start."*

CHAMPIONSHIP



CALMLY IN CONTROL

Faced with the on-form Ducatis in both the Czech Republic and Austria, Honda's Marc Márquez wisely played the percentage game. Rather than trying to take them on, the championship leader maturely settled for third place at Brno and second at Spielberg. *"I've been saying it since the start of the season – the key to the title this year will be winning when possible and collecting points when victory is out of reach. The Ducatis have been very strong for some time now, but my strategy has nevertheless enabled me to increase my advantage in the championship over Rossi, who is still second in the standings."* The Spaniard is far

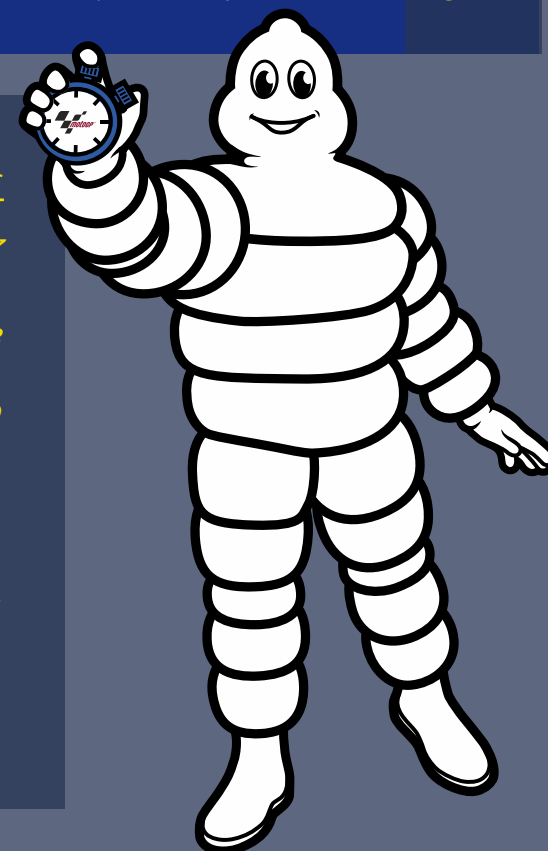
from counting his chickens just yet, however, even if at the current rate of progress, he could conceivably be crowned MotoGP champion for the fifth time as soon as October's inaugural Thailand Grand Prix. *"There are still many races to run and, who knows, circumstances or situations may contrive against me in some of them,"* cautions Márquez. *"To consider this title already in the bag would be the best way of letting it slip through our fingers. I need to carry on doing what I have done season-long – attack when and where I can, while always maintaining the same level-headed approach."*

CALENDAR - CLASSIFICATION



CLASSEMENT 2018

1 - MARQUEZ (HONDA).....	201
2 - ROSSI (YAMAHA).....	142
3 - LORENZO (DUCATI).....	130
4 - DOVIZIOSO (DUCATI).....	129
5 - VIÑALES (YAMAHA).....	113
6 - PETRUCCI (DUCATI).....	105
7 - ZARCO (YAMAHA).....	104
...	



	DATE	GRAND PRIX	CIRCUIT	
		PRE-SEASON	SEPANG, BURIRAM, LOSAIL	MAG 16
1	18/03	QATAR	LOSAIL INTERNATIONAL	
2	08/04	ARGENTINA	TERMAS DE RÍO HONDO	MAG 17
3	22/04	USA	CIRCUIT OF THE AMERICAS	
4	06/05	SPAIN	CIRCUITO DE JEREZ	
5	20/05	FRANCE	LE MANS	MAG 18
6	03/06	ITALY	MUGELLO	
7	17/06	CATALUNYA	BARCELONA-CATALUNYA	MAG 19
8	01/07	NETHERLANDS	TT CIRCUIT ASSEN	
9	15/07	GERMANY	SACHSENRING	
10	05/08	CZECH REPUBLIC	AUTOMOTODROM BRNO	
11	12/08	AUSTRIA	RED-BULL RING	MAG 20
12	26/08	GREAT BRITAIN	SILVERSTONE	
13	09/09	SAN MARINO	MISANO	
14	23/09	ARAGÓN	MOTORLAND ARAGÓN	MAG 21
15	07/10	THAILAND	CHANG INTERNATIONAL	
16	21/10	JAPAN	TWIN RING MOTEGI	
17	28/10	AUSTRALIA	PHILLIP ISLAND	MAG 22
18	04/11	MALAYSIA	SEPANG INTERNATIONAL	
19	18/11	VALENCIA	CIRCUITO RICARDO TORMO	MAG 23