

MICHELIN and the 2013 Bol d'Or

The life-size laboratory of the 2013 Endurance World Championship's opener brings Michelin second and fourth places

This weekend's 77th Bol d'Or at Nevers-Magny-Cours, France, saw MICHELIN harvest second and fourth places thanks to its partners Yamaha Monster Austria and Yamaha GMT 94.

Once again, the French motorcycle endurance racing classic produced a thrilling battle between the expected front-runners, despite the mixed conditions which included cold weather and a little rain that put the emphasis on sound tyre tactics.

Despite this challenging cocktail, MICHELIN's partners were able to benefit from the new technologies introduced by the French manufacturer for the Magny-Cours clash, notably in the realms of new constructions and compounds. MICHELIN's new tyres were both competitive (all the firm's EWC partners improved their lap times compared with the 2012 Bol d'Or) and consistent (similar lap times from the start to finish of stints). Their warm-up was also particularly fast, which turned out to be a key advantage when re-joining the race after pit-stops or when racing resumed after the different Safety Car interruptions.

The new front tyre, which featured a new construction, proved particularly versatile and allowed MICHELIN's partners to benefit from high performance across the full spectrum of temperatures that were encountered during the race, both day and night.

Meanwhile, the new rear tyre, which had a specific compound to deliver increased cornering grip and enhanced performance at low temperatures, allowed the firm's partners to produce the fastest laps when the conditions were at their most demanding.

The Yamaha France GMT94 MICHELIN Yamalube Yamaha R1 was particularly competitive during the 2013 Bol d'Or and its speed was helped by its MICHELIN tyres. At 7:42pm Saturday, after a duel lasting almost five hours, the N94 bike emerged in first place on Lap 161 and held that position for 10 minutes. After that, the gap to the leader stabilised at one lap throughout the night-time portion of the race. With six hours remaining, the Christophe GUYOT-led squad closed to within 1m22s of first place but was then compelled to make an unscheduled pit stop which saw it lose ground. It went on to finish fourth overall.

Only two versions of the new MICHELIN rear tyre were actually used, which was an eloquent illustration of the technological evolution the brand's motorcycle endurance racing tyres have undergone. Indeed, in the space of just five years, Michelin has almost halved the number of specific solutions required for this race with no detriment to either consistency or performance.

MICHELIN's developers work ceaselessly to improve the longevity of the brand's tyres, as well as on broadening the spectrum of conditions in which they can be used while maintaining the same high standard of performance and safety. This approach lies at the heart of the French tyre firm's research and development strategy – known as 'Michelin Total Performance' - which consists in simultaneously enhancing all the factors that contribute to tyre performance, even those which are commonly thought to be irreconcilable.

