**DUNLOP RACING’S UNSUNG HEROES**

*Dunlop’s Race Tyre Team solves logistical nightmares*

Dunlop Tyres has a huge commitment to South African circuit motor racing. And that commitment does not get much greater than the Dunlop ATS Racing Tyre Team that travels the length and breadth of the country to service every meeting.

Dunlop supplies tyres to the lion’s share of the National and Regional Extreme Festival classes, as well as several other categories. And to do that right, the Dunlop ATS Racing Tyre Team not only ensures that every competitor has his tyres ready for each race weekend, but the guys are on hand at all of those race meetings and beyond, to supply and fit tyres and support drivers and teams too.

“Our planning and logistics commences five months before the season even starts,” Heinz Böse, sales and marketing director of Dunlop race tyre partner ATS Motorsport explains. “We must already order tyres from Sumitomo Rubber Industries in Japan in September and then place orders every month to ensure sufficient supply throughout the race season.

“Then each race meeting has its own logistical challenges. Some competitors receive and fit tyres before the weekends, which takes a little pressure off. The truck is loaded and ready by midweek and heads across the country to be at the destination circuit on the Thursday in order for the team to be set up and ready for the Friday and Saturday race weekend. The ATS Tyre team also ensures that appropriate Dunlop Branding is put up at the various circuits and then most Sundays are consumed travelling back home.

“We fit around 150 tyres over a normal race weekend, but that can double up to 300 if it rains and we must change from slicks to wet weather tyres. The Dunlop ATS Tyre Team comprises of four people, three regulars from ATS and one volunteer from a local tyre fitting shop. The local fitter earns a certificate and a T shirt after his weekend duty. The local fitter gig is most popular in the different areas and is a great team builder too.

“The Dunlop Tyre Service at the track normally starts at 7.30 am and we try and finish by 18:00, although that’s not always plausible. We also offer a regular Wednesday practice tyre service at our facility ay Zwartkops Raceway from midday onwards. One of the busiest weekends of the season is the ILamunas 24 Hour. Last year we supplied 700 Dunlop Road tyres to 70 cars in a 24 hour tyre service for those competitors!”

To put Dunlop and ATS’ racing tyre commitment into perspective, there are seven National Extreme Festival, eight Regional Festival and eight South African Endurance Series race weekends a year, plus two or three other races and events the Tyre team must attend. Which means that the team is either working, or travelling through more than half of their weekends every year.

Looking at the numbers at the Extreme Festival, the South African Touring Cars will use four new tyres in final practice, before fitting another four for qualifying, so eight tyres all barcoded and recorded by ATS per weekend for eight cars, for 64 tyres. The fifteen SATC SupaCup competitors are allowed two new coded and recorded tyres for qualifying, so that’s another 30 tyres, excluding any other tyre changing the teams may require on site.

Up to 20 Volkswagen Polo Cup drivers are allowed four new ATS recorded tyres for qualifying, so that’s another 80 tyres. The fifteen Extreme Supercars driven by Dunlop are allowed four new tyres for qualifying, so another 60 tyres. And the Gazoo Racing League is up to 18 cars with two new tyres allowed per car, for a total of 270 new Dunlop Racing tyres over an Extreme Festival weekend. Or around 1,900 tyres for the season.

Regional Festival race weekends see Pabar VW Challenge Class A and B using two new tyres per meeting, and Class C two every second race, for around 80 new tyres per meeting. The BMW M Performance Parts Series’ 60 drivers will take around 100 new tyres, DOE Formula Vee 40, and Lotus Challenge 30 new tyres per race weekend. So a total of 250 new tyres per weekend and 2,000 Dunlop Racing Tyres over the full season.

The South African Endurance Series Backdraft Cobras use four tyres per event, or 60 for the weekend, while several other competitors there use Dunlop Racing Tyres too, and the Western Cape GTi Challenge will consume around 50 tyres a weekend. All in all, Dunlop will not only supply over 5,000 new race tyres through the 2024 season, but the Dunlop ATS Racing Tyre Team provides personal service to every competitor too.

“Our brilliant Dunlop ATS Racing Tyre Team is among South African motorsport’s most unsung heroes,” Sumitomo Rubber South Africa PR and Events Manager Joanne de Freitas concluded. “Not only do they travel the length and breadth of the country to equip and fully support our racing heroes, but they also take care of every of many, many logistical challenges behind it all.

“We are truly proud of every member of our Dunlop ATS Racing Tyre Team, and our regular volunteers’ efforts in keeping the Dunlop flag flying high in South African circuit racing and we look forward to another brilliant year ahead on track in 2024. Bring it on!”