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## **Ready-made interview with Benjamin Willot, Director Marketing Commercial Tires at Goodyear Europe, Middle East and Africa, about Goodyear Truck Racing Tires**

This year Goodyear has signed a contract with the Federation Internationale de l'Automobile (FIA) to become the tire supply partner for the FIA European Truck Racing Championship for three more years. To give closer insight into this, we put some questions to Benjamin Willot, Director Marketing Commercial Tires at Goodyear Europe, Middle East and Africa, about the development and the technology of the special Goodyear Truck Race tires as well as their supply and maintenance at the races.

### **Q – When did Goodyear start supplying tires for truck racing?**

A – In 2003, Goodyear was asked if there was any interest in supplying tires to the European Truck Racing Cup. We agreed to become involved and the first tires supplied were 'buffed' standard Goodyear Regional 315/70R22.5 RHS truck tires.

### **Q – Why did Goodyear get involved?**

A – Truck racing is an excellent platform for Goodyear to demonstrate that it is an innovative leader in truck tires as well as for testing new technologies for the development of future truck tires on the race track under challenging and competitive conditions. Also the sport is watched by many people – especially from the transport industry – on TV and at the circuits which are located right across Europe. So this is a great opportunity for us to show the high performance of our premium products to a broad audience and strengthen our brand image.



**Q – Have the tires evolved since Goodyear’s first involvement in the series?**

A – Yes quite considerably. Goodyear has a long history in truck racing: our direct involvement goes back to 2003, when we first provided ‘buffed’ standard Goodyear tires for racing. But being a premium manufacturer and innovative leader in the industry this was not enough. So we started a development program that included the creation of a special compound for better wet and dry grip and a special tread pattern. The result was a dedicated truck racing tire offering high performance levels that went into production only one year after entering truck racing.

Two years later a new truck race tire called Goodyear Truck Racing was introduced. In particular this tire was adapted for the heat, speed and other extreme conditions found on the circuit, whilst at the same time having good wear attributes and excellent grip in all conditions. Current Goodyear Truck Racing tires, as has always been the case, are built using Goodyear regular tire carcasses incorporating our latest innovations and technologies. One of these innovations is our use of RFID tire identity or ‘chip in tire technology’ as it is called, which we introduced into all truck race tires in 2011. In the transport industry this speeds up tire identification for maintenance purposes and helps optimizing transportation fleets operations. For truck racing, it is of great help to the FIA officials in their task of monitoring tire use by teams to ensure fair play.

**Q – What is the difference between a race truck and a normal haulage truck?**

A – Race trucks are modified two axle tractor units but run solo, without a trailer or load. A typical tractor you see on the road weighs 40 tonnes (with trailer and full load), has engine power of about 480 hp and torque of 2,300 Nm. It is limited to 80 – 90 km/h. A race truck weighs 5.5 tonnes, has power output of around 1,500 hp and torque of 5,000 Nm. Top speed in truck racing is restricted to 160 km/h and a race truck can accelerate from 0 – 100 km/h in about the same time as a Porsche 911.

**Q – How do your current truck race tires differ from standard truck tires?**

A – Our current race tires are built on a standard 315/70R22.5 carcass but with a special tread layer and compound. The layer and compound’s development was based our experience in truck racing and provides very high grip with, due to a dual cap construction, very high robustness. In addition and to help minimizing the risk of overheating, a special



tread sub-layer was developed. This not only helps preventing overheating but also protects the casing against damage and excessive wear. The Goodyear Truck Racing Tire has an asymmetric shoulder profile and tread pattern, optimized ground contact pressure distribution in straight running and under cornering, and high resistance against deterioration under cornering. Above all it has a very high level of grip.

If race tires required EU labels, they would show A grade in Wet Grip, B grade in fuel efficiency and Noise level of 71 dB(A) and two waves.

**Q – Why do you have RFID chips in the tires?**

A - This is a technology for making sure all teams are compliant with the tire regulations of the European Truck Race Championship and to ensure fairness. Tire use is limited and each tire has a number which is registered to a specific race truck. The tires are distributed to the drivers by a lottery system. This is determined at each race to ensure that there can be no question that drivers have been treated in a preferential manner. FIA officials and Goodyear staff have RFID readers so that they are able regulate the use of tires and their distribution.

**Q – How do the logistics work for supplying and fitting the tires?**

A – The tires are manufactured in Luxembourg and transported to the races, where they are managed by our loyal and long-term partner the Truck Racing Organisation. They provide tire service by supplying the tires to the teams as well as fitting and inflating them at each race weekend.