**New challenges, successful racing series and long-term partnerships - Hankook continued to expand its commitment to motorsport in 2019**

**Hankook expanded its involvement in motorsport in 2019. Successful partnerships with the DTM, 24H Series powered by Hankook, Rundstrecken-Challenge Nürburgring (RCN), Audi Sport Seyffarth R8 LMS Cup, and FIA Formula 4 series in Spain, Great Britain and the FIA North European Zone (NEZ) were intensified. Hankook also entered into new partnerships with promising and renowned racing formats, including the W Series, Formula Renault Eurocup and Belcar Series. The high-end Ventus Race tyre proved to be as strong and reliable as ever for drivers and teams at all national and international racetracks, while Hankook engineers and mechanics provided optimal support on site.**

***Neu-Isenburg/Germany, 13th December 2019 -*** This year marked the ninth season together for premium tyre maker Hankook and the DTM. While the DTM cars took to the track with a new turbo engine and roughly 100 extra horsepower, the Hankook race tyre was unchanged in 2019. Despite this, the Ventus Race brilliantly mastered the DTM engines’ huge increase in power and the ensuing additional strain on the tyre, impressing at every racetrack with its customary strong overall package of performance, consistency and safety.

“Top-class motorsport has always been part of the DNA of our company,” summarised Han-Jun Kim, President of Hankook Tire Europe. “Particularly with the introduction of the new, more powerful turbo engines in the DTM, we have been able to demonstrate what our premium tyres are capable of, without having modified them. As such, the early and long-term contract extension is both a recognition and a motivation for us,” Kim added.

After the DTM final in Hockenheim, Audi Motorsport Director Dieter Gass, whose driver René Rast won the title this year, said: “Despite the new turbo engine, we did not have any problems with the Hankook race tyres. As usual, the cooperation with the Hankook engineers was very good this season. We are looking forward to next year with this premium partner.” BMW Motorsport Director Jens Marquardt added: “As always, Hankook did a good job. The new, more powerful turbo engines were a challenge for everyone, but a challenge that the teams and drivers mastered well together with the Hankook race tyres. We still enjoy a great cooperation with Hankook.”

Newcomer Aston Martin was able to depend on Hankook’s Ventus Race at all times during its first season in the DTM, and gained valuable experience in arguably the most popular international touring car series. “Hankook was a reliable tyre partner in our first season with the Aston Martin Vantage DTM. It was particularly important for us, as a newcomer with a DTM car that was built in just 90 days, to be able to call on the experience of the long-term DTM partner as we gradually developed our four DTM cars. Hankook supported R-Motorsport – a new team in the fiercely competitive DTM – with existing and new tyre data. I would like to highlight the good cooperation with the Hankook technicians, whose expertise benefitted us when developing the chassis of our Aston Martin Vantage DTM. All in all, our cooperation with Hankook has been a positive experience,” said R-Motorsport team principal Dr. Florian Kamelger.

The partnership with Hankook was also a successful one for newly crowned DTM champion René Rast (Audi): “The new turbo engine and the ensuing additional power of the DTM cars made tyre management very important, as it led to a significant increase in load on the rear axle and thus on the Hankook race tyres. For this reason, you had to manage the tyres correctly during what were sometimes very long stints, in order to still be able to set fast lap times at the end of the race. That worked out superbly for me throughout the whole season. I always coped well with the Hankook race tyre, both in qualifying and the races.”

One highlight of the season were the four joint races featuring DTM drivers and their counterparts from the Japanese Super GT Series at the DTM finale in Hockenheim and in Fuji, Japan, at the end of November. Tyre management played a key role in this. In the DTM, the car set-up for each circuit must be adapted to the standard Hankook tyre, which must perform consistently at every racetrack. This is done by changing the air pressure, aerodynamics and camber values. The situation in the Super GT Series is completely different: Here, car set-up is not changed. Instead, the teams select the right tyre for the circuit from a variety of manufacturers and compounds. During the races in Germany, the teams from the Far East gained valuable experience, which they then used to good effect in winning both races at their home event in Fuji.

Narain Karthikeyan (Modulo Epson Honda NSX-GT), winner of race two at the Fuji Speedway: “Our car immediately felt good on the Hankook tyres and we were quick with them in all conditions. The joint races with Super GT and the DTM were rather special. The DTM drivers are fantastic and it was a great show for both series.”

For Gerhard Berger, 1st Chairman ITR e. V., about the DTM season 2019: "DTM requires the highest standards in terms of technology and quality from its technical partners. For the 2019 season, the demands on the tyres were higher than ever before due to the new turbo engines, which have more than 600 hp. The Hankook racing tyres have always met all requirements and proved their high performance potential."

The W Series was launched this season, with Hankook on board as a partner from the beginning. This new race format, which was held as part of the DTM support programme at six race weekends, saw an all-woman driver line-up take their place at the wheel of the 270 hp Formula 3 cars. The Hankook Ventus Race, with its high degree of consistency and predictability, proved to be the perfect partner for the young female drivers. “I was very impressed by the Hankook race tyres. You are consistently quick on them, always know how the tyre will react, and can adapt to it accordingly. My engineers were also impressed. The Hankook race tyre really helped me on my route to the title,” said Britain’s Jamie Chadwick, the first champion in this all-woman Formula series.

With the Formula Renault Eurocup, Hankook has provided another junior series with its high-end Ventus Race tyre since the start of the season. In doing so, it has supported young drivers on their way to a successful career in motorsport. This was confirmed by Russian Alexander Smolyar, who finished third overall: “Unlike with other manufacturers, you can do multiple fast laps in a row on a set of Hankook race tyres. This is a big advantage in qualifying. The tyres keep their grip for a very long time in the race. They are particularly ideal for newcomers, as they are predictable and easy to manage.”

In this regard, Hankook once again remained true to itself this year, focussing primarily on promoting young drivers. This season, talented youngsters in FIA F4 Spain, SMP F4 NEZ, and the F4 British Championships certified by FIA benefitted from the high consistency and strong performance of the Hankook race tyre, as did competitors in the Audi Sport Seyffarth R8 LMS Cup, which Hankook has been supplying with the Ventus Race since 2018. “The Hankook race tyre really suited my driving style. You can consistently set fast lap times on it and pace the race perfectly,” said new champion of the Audi GT4 one-make cup, Robin Rogalski from Poland.

The premium tyre maker once again accompanied this year’s 24H GT Series powered by Hankook as title sponsor and tyre supplier. The world’s largest endurance series, with eight rounds on three continents, featured four 12-hour and four 24-hour races – more than in any other endurance format. Professional drivers were joined on the grid at prestigious racetracks by ambitious amateurs. The cars on display ranged from compact touring cars and spectacular GT3 cars to specials, built especially in line with 24-hour regulations.

Hankook was exclusive tyre partner to the Rundstrecken-Challenge Nürburgring (RCN) again, reprising its role from 2018. A total of nine events were held in what is the oldest amateur racing series in Europe. The Nürburgring-Nordschleife hosted the RCN on eight occasions, whilst the ninth round took place at the iconic Spa-Francorchamps circuit in Belgium. At each event, the premium tyre maker supported up to 160 touring and GT race cars with the Ventus Race, which was provided in various different sizes.

Manfred Sandbichler, Hankook Motorsport Director Europe: “We have another successful motorsport year behind us. The new cooperations have all proven to be big hits, while long-term partnerships like the one with the DTM have been expanded and intensified. Hankook will continue to direct its attention to the area of junior racing, but will also continue to support renowned and prestigious racing series with its high-tech products and know-how. We offer a large and high-performance range of products and will be good for a surprise or two again next year. For example, at the recent tuning and motorsports fair ‘Essen Motor Show’ in Germany, we were able to announce a new, top-class Hankook commitment, in the form of the tyre partnership with the DTM Trophy.”

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**About Hankook**

Hankook Tire manufactures globally innovative, award winning radial tyres of proven superior quality for passenger cars, light trucks, SUVs, RVs, trucks, and buses as well as motorsports (circuit racing/rallies).

Aspiring to bring consumers the utmost excellence in product quality, technological excellence and driving satisfaction, Hankook Tire continuously invests in research and development maintaining five R&D centres and eight production facilities around the world. Bespoke tyre solutions for the European markets as well as European Original Equipment according to the requirements of leading premium car manufacturers, are developed in the company’s regional Technical Centre in Hanover/Germany. Production for the European region is taking place in the state-of-the-art manufacturing site in Rácalmás/Hungary which was inaugurated in June 2007 and is continuously being expanded. Currently around 3,000 employees produce up to 19 million tyres a year for passenger cars, SUVs and light trucks.

Hankook Tire’s European headquarters are located in Neu-Isenburg near Frankfurt am Main in Germany. The manufacturer operates further branches in Czech Republic, France, Germany, Hungary, Italy, the Netherlands, Poland, Russia, Spain, Sweden, Turkey, UK and Ukraine. Hankook products are sold directly through regional distributors in other local markets. Hankook Tire employs approximately 21,000 people worldwide and are selling their products in over 180 countries. Internationally leading car manufacturers rely on tyres made by Hankook for their original equipment. Approximately 30 percent of the company's global sales are generated within the European and CIS-Region. Hankook Tire has been represented in the renowned Dow Jones Sustainability Index World (DJSI World) since 2016.

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