Shell Introduces The Most Energy Efficient Cars Ever Seen On Track At Le Mans 24 Hours

Thursday 11 June, 2015

Students who engineer and drive cars that could complete the Le Mans 24 hours on just over a litre of fuel were on track at the world's most famous motor race on Wednesday, 10 June.

Staking a claim to be the most energy-efficient vehicles ever to roll a wheel on the hallowed Le Mans tarmac, the Shell Eco-marathon vehicles built by teams of French students have achieved up to 3,771 km per litre.

This year marks the 30th anniversary of Shell Eco-marathon Europe, which started in France in 1985. The global competition challenges students to design, build and drive the most efficient vehicles, pushing the boundaries of energy efficiency and mobility on the road.

The Shell Eco-marathon teams' visit underlined the Le Mans 24 Hours' status as one of racing's leading blends of efficiency and speed.

Vincent Beaumesnil, Sporting Director of the Automobile Club de l'Ouest, said: "It is important to everyone at the ACO that the 24 Heures du Mans is an inspiration to the designers of our future technologies. As such we are delighted to welcome the Shell Eco-marathon competitors to Le Mans, in partnership with Shell, to highlight the possibilities for efficient energy consumption that are being developed in our race and theirs."

Le Mans competitors Nick Heidfeld and Nicolas Prost from Rebellion Racing checked out the cars and met the student engineers and drivers from teams Microjoule La Joliverie, CityJoule and Estaca.

Said Nicolas Prost race driver: "These incredible Shell Eco-marathon cars take the idea of long-distance driving to an entirely different dimension! It's impressive and we can only wonder what these young people will go on to achieve in the future. The parallels with the efficiency improvements we're striving for in the World Endurance Championship are fascinating."

The Microjoule La Joliverie car would use just 1.3 litres of fuel to cover the winning distance of 5165km from last year's 24 hours of Le Mans – albeit not quite reaching the 330km/h that the LMP1 sports prototype cars will travel this weekend!

Shell is the Official Fuel Partner to the FIA World Endurance Championship, of which the Le Mans 24 Hours is the premier event in the series. Unique Shell V-Power and Shell V-Power Diesel racing fuels have been co-engineered with the competing manufacturers to meet stringent fuel efficiency targets that were set at the beginning of the 2014 season.

As the organiser and promoter of the FIA World Endurance Championship and Le Mans 24 Hours, the Automobile Club de l'Ouest (ACO) has worked collaboratively with Shell to create the successful new era of fuel efficiency at Le Mans.

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Notes to editors

Shell has partnered more than 50 victories in the 82 Le Mans 24 Hours races staged since 1923. Its first victory came with Bentley in 1924 and it has developed fuel and lubricant solutions for winning technologies such as turbo charging (Porsche, 1976), direct fuel injection (Audi, 2001) and diesel racing engines (Audi, 2006).

The difference between winning and losing the world's most famous motor race is now measured in fuel efficiency since the ACO implemented a 30% reduction in fuel consumption at the start of the 2014 season.

In real terms this means that cars competing for outright victory at Le Mans must attain fuel consumption no higher than a single litre of fuel for every 2.5km travelled. The winning car at Le Mans 24 Hours will therefore have driven the same distance as approximately 18 Grands Prix using almost 40% less fuel and travelling at a 20% higher average speed.

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About Shell Eco-marathon

Shell Eco-marathon is a unique, global competition that challenges students to push the boundaries of energy efficiency on the road. There are three Shell Eco-marathon competitions held throughout the year in Asia, America and Europe. The competition provides an arena for students to test vehicles they design and build themselves. It aims to inspire young people to become scientists and engineers of the future.

The challenge demands innovative problem-solving, creativity and collaboration. It is a unique, hands-on experience that equips students with invaluable skills and knowledge. Shell Eco-marathon – together with Shell Energy Lab and the Powering Progress Together forum – attracts thousands of visitors every year, sparking debate around the future of energy and mobility.

At Shell Eco-marathon Europe, a future generation of engineers and scientists aged 16-25 from around 30 countries in Europe and beyond compete against each other. Success is determined by the distance each team travels on the equivalent of 1 litre of fuel. With Rotterdam as the host city, Shell brings the competition closer to the public with a fit-for-purpose street circuit.

Shell Eco-marathon Europe is a visible demonstration of Shell's concern with helping the world to meet its growing energy needs in a responsible way and demonstrates its collaborative approach, bringing together students, partners and the public.

Shell Eco-marathon Europe celebrated its 30th anniversary this year. It was the fourth time in a row it took place in Rotterdam, the Netherlands. Various activities around the challenge were offered at the venue to engage and inspire European citizens in the future of our energy and the technologies to meet our future needs.

Shell Eco-marathon is a global initiative with similar events in the US and Asia every year. Shell Eco-marathon Americas took place April 9-12 in Detroit, Michigan and Shell Eco-marathon Asia took place February 26 - March 1 in Manila, Philippines.

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