



WorldSBK Pirelli Spanish Round 2026

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PRESS RELEASE

Pirelli and WorldSBK, over one million laps and 23 seasons of records and track-to-road innovation

As the Official Sole Tyre Supplier 2004-2026, Pirelli greatly contributed to the Championship's technical evolution, turning the competitions into an innovation and test lab for track-developed technology and performance, then transferred to road tyres

Giorgio Barbier, Pirelli Motorcycle Racing Director, *"We have developed racing and road tyres for more than two decades. Although our journey in WorldSBK is coming to an end, we will continue to innovate our racing products to boost on-the-road technology and performance"*.



With the Pirelli Spanish Round held at Jerez de la Frontera, **Pirelli** concluded its journey as the Official Sole Tyre Supplier in the **FIM Superbike World Championship**, after **23 consecutive seasons**. This partnership was crucial in shaping the technical identity of the premier production-derived motorcycle championship, through continuous product development, technological innovation and an unwavering focus on tyre safety and reliability, while constantly working alongside the organisers, the federation, manufacturers and teams.

Giorgio Barbier, Pirelli Motorcycle Racing Director, said, *"For more than two decades, we turned WorldSBK into an innovation lab, and helped organisers, the federation, manufacturers and teams in its evolution. By constantly creating and fine-tuning new compounds, structures and solutions, we have boosted performance and set new records year after year, while also generating technology and expertise that went on to be transferred to road tyres. We pursued this quest right through the final season, and it does not end here: the experience gained in WorldSBK will continue to drive Pirelli's leading edge both in motorsport and on the road"*.

Pirelli's history in the production-derived motorcycle World Championship began in 1989, with the company's official debut on Rumi's team Honda RC30, ridden by the then reigning World Champion Fred Merkel. After narrowly missing the podium on his opener race at Donington Park, the American rider secured pole position and won both Hungaroring races, setting himself on course to defend his world title. After stepping back from major motorcycle racing championships in the 1990s, Pirelli returned to the forefront in 2004, when the WorldSBK promoter selected the company as the Official Sole Tyre Supplier, introducing a model that would mark a turning point in international motorsport.

From track to road, a distinctive strategy

Pirelli's approach to the World Superbike Championship was driven by a clear strategy: to turn racing into a genuine development lab for motorcyclists. And in a production-derived motorcycle championship, this meant using tyres that would closely resemble the products available on the market, rather than solutions designed exclusively for racing.

Non-stop technological innovation

From the outset of its involvement in World Superbike, Pirelli embarked on an innovation journey that progressively redefined racing tyre performance, and then transferred the knowledge gained on the track to improve road products as well.

After its launch in 2005, the DIABLO™ Superbike became a benchmark in the racing slick range. It was followed by the DIABLO™ Supercorsa in 2007, developed for the championship's support classes, then used in 2008 to create the DIABLO™ Supercorsa SP, a high-performance road tyre. In 2012, the SC0 compound was introduced for the DIABLO™ Superbike, and then extended to the road range the following year. In 2013, the rims went from 16.5-inch to 17-inch, resembling production motorcycle configurations even more. The 125/70 front and 200/65 rear tyre sizes arrived in 2018, followed by the SCX supersoft compound in 2019, and the SCQ extrasoft compound in 2022, which maximised performance over a single flying lap. And from 2020 onwards, all classes in the championship adopted slick tyres.

"Despite operating under a single-tyre supplier system and always providing competitive products, our goal has consistently been to improve our game, year after year, by offering state-of-the-art products while paying extremely close attention to market demands. This was especially true in the early years, when end users wanted and needed a pure racing product they could use on the track. We recognised that need, by continuing to develop increasingly better products, and, most of all, by introducing new race-to-road sizes, which became the new benchmark for the sports motorcycles on the market," added Barbier.

From supplier to strategic partner

Over the course of those 23 seasons, Pirelli's role evolved into a proactive partnership supporting the championship's development. Beyond the technical aspects, this commitment fostered on a close-knit relationship with Infront first and Dorna second, encompassing even marketing and communication activities.

The various initiatives, initially conceived for Pirelli's guests, were gradually extended to the entire paddock, making the championship more attractive and engaging for supporters and for a broader audience, while strengthening its visibility.

Development and records, right through to the final round

The 2026 season confirmed the consistency of this approach. Pirelli continued to develop its lines through to the final event, providing WorldSBK riders with 17 front and rear tyre solutions, combining standard range products with development specifications. This commitment continued throughout this last season, backed by constant performance gains and new milestones: 10 all-time lap records and 11 race lap records, alongside significant race distance improvements.

From James Toseland, the first World Champion of the Pirelli era in 2004, aboard the Ducati 999 F04, to Nicolò Bulega, who dominated the 2026 season on the Ducati Panigale V4 R with XX wins in 36 races, Pirelli's sporting and technological journey in WorldSBK spanned 23 seasons and accompanied the championship's evolution and the performance of production-derived motorcycles. Now that this extraordinary chapter is coming to an end, the wealth of knowledge and expertise we have gained will continue to drive Pirelli's tyre development and our commitment to the highest racing levels.

Pirelli WorldSBK statistics, 2004–2026

- **Rounds held:** 289
- **Total races:** 661
- **Total km race laps completed in the WorldSBK class:** 1,143,782
- **Riders at start:** 1,020
- **Number of circuits:** 33
- **Highest top speed:** 339.500 km/h (T. Sykes, Kawasaki – Monza 2012)
- **Fastest race average speed:** 201.814 km/h (M. Melandri, BMW – Monza 2013)
- **Highest average lap speed:** 205.459 km/h (T. Sykes, Kawasaki – Monza 2013)
- **Top three host nations for number of rounds:** Italy 51, Spain 41, UK 30
- **Most races hosted by a circuit:** 54 (Magny-Cours, Phillip Island, Assen and Misano)

Pirelli WorldSBK statistics, 2026

- **All-time Lap records:** 10
- **Race lap records:** 11
- **Riders at start:** 30
- **Tyre specifications:** 17 (5 front and 12 rear)
- **Tyres used:** 5,544
- **Total km race laps completed in the WorldSBK class:** 52,090