

Motorsport is in Dunlop's DNA

By [Lubin Ozoux](#), issued by [Sumitomo Dunlop](#)

20 Dec 2022

From its early beginnings, Sumitomo Rubber South Africa's (SRSA) flagship brand Dunlop has set out to deliver a better tyre experience, with safety and comfort and its heart, no matter the speed.

But did you know that the Dunlop story didn't start on four wheels or even on two – but on three! Over 130 years later, SRSA is really proud of what has become Dunlop's rich motorsport legacy.

In 1888 Dunlop's founder, John Boyd Dunlop – an Irish veterinary surgeon and inventor – was watching his young son riding his tricycle. As the solid rubber tyres went over cobbled ground, it was clear that his little boy was not going very fast and did not seem very comfortable.

Wanting to provide his son with more comfort, speed and better handling on his tricycle, John Boyd Dunlop took the tricycle, wrapped its wheels in thin rubber sheets, glued them together and inflated them with a football pump.

It was an idea hatched from love – and one that sparked instant joy. This makeshift air cushioning system laid the foundation for the world's very first pneumatic (or air pressured) tyre for bicycles, after similar technology had been introduced a few years earlier to improve the efficiency and comfort of horse-drawn carriers.





Less than a year later, Dunlop's new invention made its racing debut – now on two wheels, when a little-known cyclist harnessed the new technology to beat stronger rivals in a series of bicycle races ... And so began the role of racing as a principal feature of the Dunlop heritage.

Dunlop soon patented his idea and started to develop his invention into a commercial venture.

Over 130 years later, with Dunlop today offering tyres for the full spectrum of motoring applications, that early motorsport heritage has remained an important part of the brand's continued evolution into one of the most recognised tyre makers in the world.

Racing is in Dunlop's DNA

For decades, Dunlop has celebrated exceptional strides in global motorsport and endeared itself to racing enthusiasts. Globally, the brand has sponsored prestigious racing events including Formula 1, Aussie V8 Supercars, European Le Mans 24 Hours, Moto 2 and Moto 3 (Bikes).

Locally, motorsport is a big part of the Dunlop South Africa brand. Unlocking innovation with Dunlop's racing tyres and elevating local motorsport helps to bring joy to motorsport drivers and enthusiasts – and that in turn brings the company immense joy.

With the opening up of events and the easing of Covid-19 restrictions in 2022, we were really excited to get back to some of our strong motorsport links and play a big role at a number of the major motoring events in 2022.

Dunlop was the official tyre sponsor of four out of seven race categories at South Africa's premier motorsport series, the National Extreme Festival, which kicked off in March and ran until October at five of the best racetracks in South Africa.

Circuits raced on Dunlop tyres included Global Touring Cars (GTC), GTC SupaCup, Compcare VW Polo Cup and the new Toyota Gazoo Racing SA Cup.



Dunlop tyres also took centre stage at the Regional Extreme Festival, including the Pabar VW Challenge, the Lotus Challenge, Car Care Clinic SuperHatch and Formula Vee.

Rounding off Dunlop South Africa's motorsport backing was the GTI Challenge in Cape Town.

Dunlop was also a proud sponsor of the Festival of Motoring (FOM) 2022, which took place at the Kyalami Grand Prix Circuit in August.



At each of these race events, drivers could rely on the Dunlop Racing Service team to keep the wheels turning and all on track. This support service – operated from a fully equipped Dunlop Racing mobile workshop – caters for any racing tyre need and is free to all drivers competing on Dunlop tyres.

Racing plays a big role in the development of Dunlop's tyre technology for the public. The performance segment enables the brand to really showcase innovation, performance, safety and durability, because when you push a car and its tyres to the limit, that's when you truly see what they're made of. This gives customers the ultimate peace of mind on the road - aligned with the Sumitomo purpose of creating a future of joy and well-being through innovation.

Staying true to Dunlop's strong motorsport heritage, 2022 saw the launch of the new ultra-high performance tyre, the SP Sport Maxx 060+. This is a premium tyre for passenger cars, sports models, and SUVs and crossovers, taking the same thrill of the high-speed raceway, and combining it with luxurious comfort to provide the ultimate ride.

Over 130 years, Dunlop's intention remains that of wanting drivers to be able to get the most out of their vehicles, knowing they can depend on these tyres for speed, control and reliability, race after race, and road after road.

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Sumitomo Dunlop



Sumitomo Rubber South Africa, known as Sumitomo Dunlop, is a leading tyre manufacturing organisation in South Africa. Sumitomo Dunlop manufactures the Dunlop, Sumitomo and Falken tyre brands for Africa.

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