



## Tough Test Regime Helps Prepare Team Sky Ford Mondeo Support Car for “the Hell of the North” Cycle Race

- Team Sky cycling team’s Ford Mondeo support car is well-prepared for “the Hell of the North” Paris-Roubaix race with a tough development regime at Ford’s Lommel test facility
- Lommel Proving Ground in Belgium has 80 kilometres (50 miles) of test tracks with extreme surfaces that include potholes and cobbles just like in the Paris-Roubaix cycle race
- Team Sky Mondeos feature modified suspension and Intelligent All Wheel Drive to help carry 400 kilograms of kit including spare bikes and wheels, tools, and even a coolbox
- Three-time Tour de France-winning team will use a Mondeo with specially raised ground clearance for the potholes, ruts and cobbles in the gruelling Paris-Roubaix race, April 10

**COLOGNE, Germany, Apr. 7, 2016** – Cyclists call it “the Hell of the North”.

The Paris-Roubaix cycle race is one of the most gruelling on the calendar. The punishing route covers almost 260 kilometres (160 miles) including pothole-scarred roads and 50 kilometres (31 miles) of cobblestones.

Paris-Roubaix is not only tough on the 200 riders and their bikes – the race also dishes out punishment to support cars including the Team Sky Ford Mondeo during six hours on the road in northern France.

Like all Ford vehicles for Europe, Team Sky’s Mondeo has been developed to withstand rough roads at Ford’s Lommel Proving Ground in Belgium. There, vehicles are pounded over test tracks covering 80 kilometres (50 miles).

The Lommel test facility features more than 100 extreme surfaces and a diabolical 1.9-kilometre (1.2-mile) road that consists of precise replicas of some of the worst potholes and road hazards from around the world – including tough French cobbles just like in the Paris-Roubaix race.

Ford engineers have given the Team Sky Mondeo stiffer springs and suspension to help it comfortably carry throughout the racing season more than 400 kilograms of extra weight, including three team members, nine bikes, five spare wheels, more than 50 drinks bottles, tools, and even a large coolbox.

Specifically for the Paris-Roubaix event on April 10, an additional 20 millimetres of ground clearance is added for tackling the rutted roads. Underneath, 5 millimetre alloy plates protect the engine, brake lines and differential from debris or knocks.

“Paris-Roubaix delivers some of the worst punishment imaginable for a car – exactly the scenario that our engineers in Lommel are testing for every day,” said Stephan Anssems, senior

engineer, Vehicle Dynamics, Ford of Europe. “While stiffer and well protected, at the heart of Team Sky’s Mondeo is the same tough and durable design that goes into all of our vehicles.”

Team Sky’s Mondeo wagon also is equipped with Ford Intelligent All Wheel Drive technology. The system measures how the car’s wheels are gripping the road surface and can adjust torque delivery between the front and rear wheels in under 20 milliseconds – twenty times quicker than it takes to blink – to tackle slippery or loose surfaces.

Continuous Control Damping with Pothole Mitigation technology adjusts the Team Sky Mondeo’s suspension if it detects that a wheel has dropped into a pothole, and can help protect the suspension from damage.

“A rider’s worst nightmare is getting a puncture and finding there’s no team car in sight,” said Servais Knaben, Sport Director, Team Sky. “We rely on our Team Sky Ford Mondeo to battle through the toughest conditions and be on the spot to deliver the new wheel, rolling medical attention or drinks bottle that could be the difference between first and second place.”

Ford earlier this year announced a multi-year partnership agreement with Team Sky to become the elite cycling team’s exclusive supplier of cars and vans. The partnership has already started well, with a win in the Paris-Nice seven-day race, and will include the three annual Grand Tour events comprising the Giro d’Italia, Tour de France and Vuelta a España. Other vehicles in the Team Sky fleet include the Ford Kuga SUV, S-MAX sports activity vehicle, Tourneo Custom people mover and Transit van.

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