



Photos JACOB EBREY

MOTORBASE FOCUS BTCC

TESTING, TESTING...

The Motorbase crew head to Spain for some pre-season testing...



While the UK ground to a halt because of all the snow recently, we headed out to Spain for some pre-season testing on the Focus RS BTCC cars. But don't think we escaped the terrible weather – it snowed during one of our test days too. Yes, in Spain! Thankfully, however, it was only a short burst, we didn't lose too much running time (in fact, we stayed out longer because flights back to the UK were delayed as a result of all the snow!), and we racked up some really decent testing time on track. Over 2,500Km in total!

We needed to test the cars, since the RS conversion was more than a simple cosmetic facelift – much more. The engine has been reworked by the gurus over at mountune, while the guys at Pro Alloy have totally redesigned the car's cooling package. And, of course, every single bodywork panel has been replaced with RS bits. Plus, we've added a few secret upgrades that our engineers have been working on too!

We've done some dyno testing, and a bit of track time as a shakedown in the UK, but in order to get some decent mileage under our belts we loaded all three cars in

the trucks and headed out to Parcmotor Castelloli near Barcelona.

Our 2018 drivers Tom Chilton, Sam Tordoff, and James Cole all took part in the testing over the course of the week. Tom and Sam were there from the start, clocking up 300Km each on day one and a further 270Km a piece on day two, before day three was abandoned due to snow and we were sent home from the circuit at lunch time!

Feedback from the first two days was fantastic. Both Tom and Sam were very happy with the initial performance of the car, and we even got some 'snow' data on the end of day two... you never know if that'll

come in handy with the British weather!

Day four started in the wet, which wasn't necessarily a bad thing as it gave us the opportunity to test the car's wet settings too. After lunch things dried up and we got back on track with the testing programme, when we were then joined by the team's latest addition, James Cole. James re-joined the team after the sudden departure of Mat Jackson earlier in the month and will be driving the second Team Shredded Wheat Racing with Gallagher Focus RS. Having raced with us back in 2015, James is well-known (and liked) by the team and slotted seamlessly in to place.

Testing continued on day five, which gave us the best conditions of the whole week. All three cars ran together on track, they all ran faultlessly, and we got some invaluable data to take into the new season. Over the week we managed to cover an impressive 2,500Km during the test programme, and the whole team is excited ahead of the 2018 Championship. There's a real buzz around the place this year; we've got the right team, the right sponsors, the right drivers, and hopefully, the right car, to make 2018 our year. We'll find out at Brands Hatch on April 8th when the season officially starts, but we can't wait! **FF**



The team headed to Spain for some pre-season testing