

Tire cost?

Posted by Sterling Doc - 01 Mar 2011 06:40

Guys,

What are you guys seeing for RA-1 costs out West?

Locally, RA-1's run from \$152-\$160 per tire, plus \$15 for shaving. For the \$160 cost, I get them delivered to the track, and don't pay tax.

I just bought a set of 4 for \$668 + tax, that I pick up locally.

I'm curious if we can leverage the size of our class for a group buy to lower the cost for the upcoming season, and also see how much costs vary regionally

Re: Tire cost?

Posted by JB3 - 03 Mar 2011 04:47

RacerX wrote:

... Only 3 weekends, that's all they last????? and \$700 for a set??? Surely you joke. Tell me it ain't so, please.

Seen just this conversation over and over and ... whether it be Toyos or Hoos. The really really good drivers can and do use up tires much faster (than the rest of us). I know guys back here who think Hoos are just as cheap as Toyos because for them the Hoos last a bazillion heat cycles. The thing is they never ever get near maxing out the tire and so (1) don't use it up as fast, and (2) wouldn't feel the degradation anyway. (I'm not dissing anyone, friend or foe, with this comment - it's a fact of life that most of us just are not that good.)

Toyos certainly have a longer sweet spot than for example Hoos. (And unlike Hoos it's not the first or second run). But the better you are the shorter it gets. For perspective if you were running on the podium in a competitive series using Hoos your hearts desire would be to run stickers every race! Then sell them and the next guy probably would finish out the year.

So I have no difficulty believing the Champion legitimately used up a set in 3 weekends (how many heat cycles is that?); I also know I could run a lot longer than that myself.

Re: Tire cost?

Posted by joepaluch - 03 Mar 2011 05:46

RA-1 tire life .

Facts.. RA-1 tire life is 24-30 heat cycles. This the life before the tire cycles out. I have run RA-1 since 2002 and run something like 16 sets over the years and this is assuming a competitive car run near track record pace. How many weekends is that? I don't know you need to figure it out. Interestingly I get 6 more usefull heat cylce shaved. They don't last and longer or any shorter shaved, but they are faster sooner so need less break in time so they competitive longer. The RA-1 is an excellent tire, but cost is increasing, but not like you might think.

Fact... When we started on RA-1 back in 2002 for the 2003 season most of us Ran Kumho victoracers at \$122 each. We did not shave them. RA-1's were 145 a each. However they lasted twice as long as Victoracers. My last set of Victoracers netted 16 heat cycles before cording. The first set of RA-1 got me 50. Now since then lap times have dropped because I have pushed harder so I have settled near 24-28 and interestingly race heat cycles are harder on the tire than practice or qualfing heat cycles. However average over my multiple sets is 24-30.

Point I am making is that back in 2002 we jumped to the more expensive, but longer lasting RA-1 at 145 each. Some point either in 2004 or 2005 the price dropped to 128 a tire. Then gradually the price went up to 152 a tire. These are of course unshaved and unmounted. If you look at the selection in 225/50 R15 size the RA-1 is still well priced.

The only thing cheaper is the Nitto NT01. Not sure why the Nitto is cheaper other than for marketing reasons.

Take a look at the prices on Tire Rack

R-tires

Hoosier R6 = \$228 each

Kumho V710 = \$198 each

Kumho Victoracer = \$171 each (These were \$122 back in 2002)

Yoko ADVAN A048 = \$227 each

Street tires

Yoko ES100 - \$109 - Cheap street tire, but not suitable for hard track use. I have these on my 944 Turbo Street car and ran on them on a 944 NA street car for autocross. Ok, but will not survive racing like we do nor be any fun to drive.

Kumho Ecsta AST- \$64 - Well they are cheap.., but All season tires.. .Really

So the RA-1 has gone up less than the comparable Victoracer in the past 8 years.

Also NTO1 - Best I see now is sale from Discount on 225/45/15 for 134 each. They don't list a 225/50/15. Other places I see the Nitto for 147 in this size making it close the RA-1.

Point is that we understand tire costs are the second biggest expense in racing these cars. First is entry fees. That is a major reason I pushed to move away from the R888 as despite all my best efforts I could not get it to last very long.

I still think the RA-1 is great tire and great tire for the class. The contingency helps offset some cost, but I personally wish they would pay deeper for fields at 10+ cars.

At this point and I sure Eric will bring up these concerns with the National office. NASA is linked to Toyo, but at the same time they were able to get production of the RA-1 restarted after the R888 fiasco. So they do have some pull.

Also remember that any tire change will end-up costing us money. Money in stand point of needing to test and develop a set-up for the tire and time for the transition. Some guys will want to last on the old tire for as long as possible and others will want to change fast. So if you have the money to spend you work the system to your edge during the transition. That could mean buying up RA-1 and stock piling or

being faster on development cycle with the next tire. If we went to a radical change like a street tire it would mean throwing away lots of good rubber since you can't ever expect a street tire to perform in anyway close to an R-tire. So we must force a change.

So the main point I am making is that we cannot just change tires easily. We can try to work in the system to effect change for the better for our class. We directors understand the importance of per event tire costs and the need to control them.

So please understand that firstly a spec tire is essential to our class and that it must be the best overall deal for all of our racers give a lot of factors.

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Re: Tire cost?

Posted by Sterling Doc - 03 Mar 2011 06:55

Though I'm a bit loath to go down this road any more, I do think the larger picture needs to be seen, because this hasn't been spelled out before online, and it's been brought up here.

For an 8 event season, Toyo pays out \$8,150 in Toyo bucks, including the year end regional championship. That's just over \$1,000 per weekend amortized through the year.

We've established that a set of Toyos can be had for under \$700 if you shop around (more or less, depending on taxes).

Toyos life varies on many things, but let's conservatively say the average guy goes through 2 sets per year, or 4 weekends each. So the average guy's tire budget is \$1400 per year.

We've established Nittos cost a bit more than \$500/set (even before taxes), but for the sake of round numbers, let's give Nitto the benefit of the doubt, and say \$500, which makes an annual tire budget of \$1000.

So the average guy spends \$400 more per year to get Toyo *before contingencies*. \$400 per year into \$8,150 = just over 20 racers on an average weekend before Nittos become more cost effective.

The median field size nationwide is what, 8-10 cars on average? It looks like Toyos come out ahead, and Toyo really isn't making more money on RA-1's than Nittos after all.

Yes, you can game the system by splitting the fields to have the minimum number on Toyos, and the rest on Nittos, but not in one class. Two tires do not make a spec class.

From Toyos perspective, it takes a 6 car average field ($6 \times \$1,400$ annual tire budget) before they break even with the \$8,100 they pay out in Toyo bucks. If you give them no opportunity for an upside from that, it doesn't make real good business sense.

Our tires are cheap, compared to AI, which gets the same money in contingencies. We're coming out pretty well in the larger scope. If we further game the system, we may kill the good thing that we have, and divide the class on top of it.

I will see what I can do to make this better, but its important to realize where we're at in the big picture.

Re: Tire cost?

Posted by cbuzzetti - 03 Mar 2011 08:14

Thank you Joe and Erik for your comprehensive replies.

I did the math on this as well and I don't see how Toyo is making anything on us. don't forget that they paid out over \$5000 last year at Nationals and over \$10,000 in 2009 just for 944spec.

My guess is that Toyo is able to pay these contingencies because they sell a lot more tires to all the racers in all the clubs not just Spec classes.

My tires cycle out at about 18 cycles due to the abrasive nature of the tracks in So-Cal.

I do not run my tires to the cords, when they are not capable of running close to competitive speeds I move on.

An average weekend with Nasa is 6 on track sessions, hence the 3 weekend format I used for

calculations.

My guess is the average is 4 weekends with flat spotting and practice days thrown in.

Toyo has treated 944spec/NASA well. No need to make any changes.

Re: Tire cost?

Posted by 944Racer72 - 03 Mar 2011 08:56

As another data point, I think ~ 24 heat cycles is about right for the life of shaved RA-1s before they start to fall off for a front running car. If you aren't running all out, they will last much longer but not at optimum pace.

Having raced on Hoosiers, I love the RA-1s and the Toyo contingency program. The RA-1 is a much more progressive tire that allows you to slide the car easily and catch it. It is also forgiving of brake lock up and wears well while maintaining speed. In short, it is a great tire for this class.

Joe and Eric are right on target with their assessments. Any change would have to be extremely well thought out ahead of time and would need to be beneficial to all grid positions. If it ain't broke, don't F with it.

From my perspective, out Toyo tire program is one of the best things about 944 Spec. Thank you Toyo!
