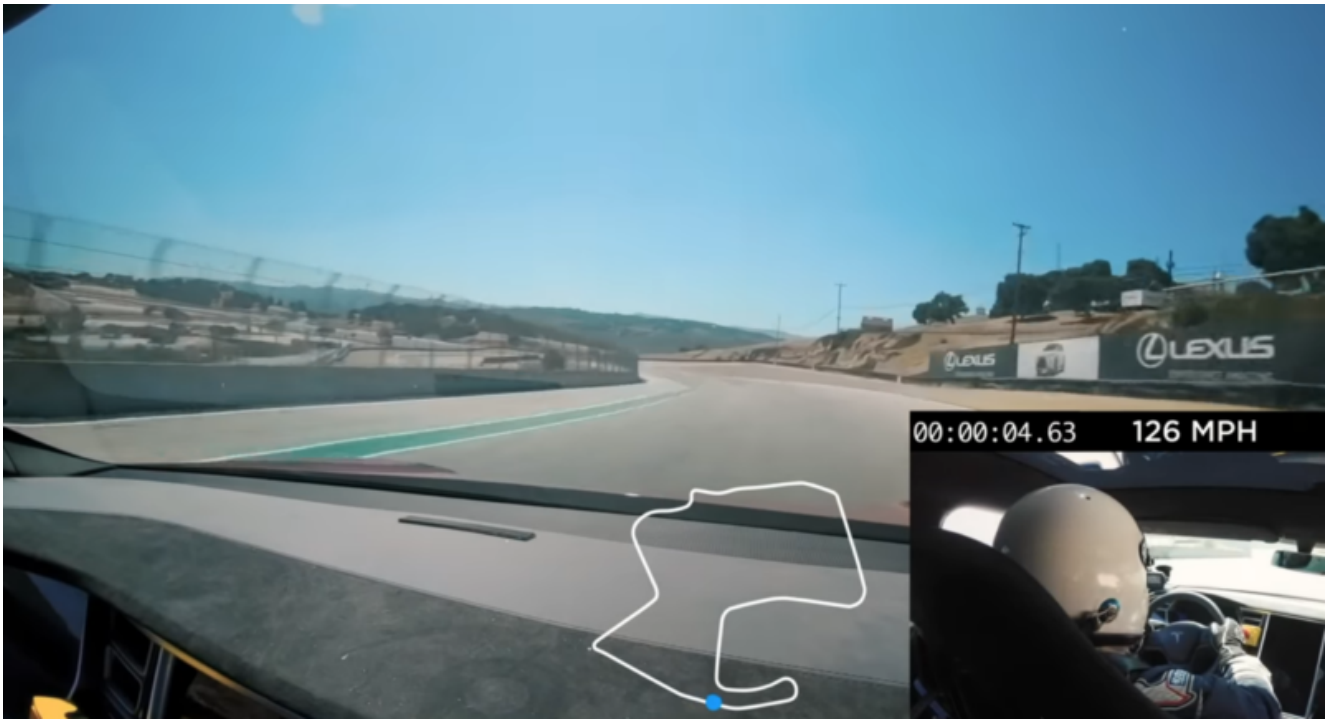
Tesla touts raceway record with 3-motor powertrain prototype



Enlarge / A shot from Tesla's video at the Laguna Seca racetrack.

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Tesla is working on a new three-motor powertrain for the Model S that will accelerate even faster than Tesla's current "Ludicrous Mode," the company said on Wednesday. In a nod to *Spaceballs*, Tesla CEO Elon Musk has dubbed the new system "Plaid."

"Plaid powertrain is about a year away from production," Musk tweeted. He said it would be available for the Model S, Model X, and the new Roadster—but not the lower-end Model 3 and

Model Y. He said that the new design will “cost more than our current offerings, but less than competitors.”

On Wednesday, Tesla tested a prototype of this souped-up Model S at the Laguna Seca raceway. The vehicle achieved a lap time of 1:36.555, which Tesla says is a new record for a four-door sedan. You can watch a video of the record-setting lap here.

The announcement comes a week after Musk tweeted that Tesla would have a Model S at the Nürburgring racetrack in Germany. This was an apparent response to Porsche testing its own Taycan electric car there and completing a lap in 7 minutes 42 seconds. But racetrack officials soon pointed out that Tesla hadn’t reserved time on the track to make a record attempt. Musk was later forced to acknowledge that Tesla wouldn’t be making a record attempt there in the near future.

The Model S’s electric drivetrain gives it impressive acceleration capabilities. However, some people attempting to set racing records, at the Nürburgring and elsewhere, have run into issues with the battery overheating after a few minutes on the track. In 2014, for example, Jalopnik’s Robb Holland drove a Model S at the Nürburgring but was forced to slow down after about three minutes due to battery overheating issues. (To be fair, other electric vehicles have similar challenges.) This is less of an issue on a shorter track like the Laguna Seca.

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