



PRESS RELEASE

MOTORSPORT

Le Mans (France) – June 11, 2023

Michelin innovations play central role at the centenary Le Mans 24 Hours

- Michelin's new Hypercar range lived up to expectations, in spite of the drama-packed weekend's fickle weather which led to numerous interruptions.
- Michelin's tyres for the 2023 Le Mans 24 Hours contained a higher proportion of sustainable materials (up to 30 percent and 45 percent respectively in the case of its slicks and wet-weather tyres) and provided the firm's Hypercar partners with a confidence-boosting combination of performance and consistency that enabled them to run triple-stint strategies.
- Tyre strategy played a big role in the duel between Ferrari AF Corse and Toyota Gazoo Racing.

True to the adage "All's well that ends well", the centenary Le Mans 24 Hours got away to a somewhat chaotic start due to the heavy rain that fell intermittently over different portions of the circuit for a period of some eight hours. Indeed, the poor weather had a major influence on how the early part of the race unfolded, but the conditions then dried gradually overnight, and Sunday turned out to be entirely sunny. As is frequently the case at Le Mans, this year's race could be broken down into different phases and tyre strategy had a significant influence on the various battles that could be seen going on up and down the field. The fact that the race-lead changed hands more than 30 times shows how balanced the field was, and several teams appeared regularly in the top four over the 24 hours.

The track was cold and damp in places when action got under way at 4pm on Saturday afternoon, forcing the teams to think carefully about their respective tyre strategies. The performance of the Toyota Gazoo Racing cars on the soft-compound MICHELIN Pilot Sport slicks they fitted for the start initially caught Ferrari AF Corse by surprise. The Italian make, whose brace of 499Ps monopolized the front row of the grid, had gone for the medium option, and its cars were initially passed by the Toyotas before becoming more assertive a few laps into the race.

Grip was effectively at a premium during the first eight hours or so as heavy showers fell over the French circuit. Choosing the ideal moment to switch to the MICHELIN Pilot Sport Wet was crucial, especially on those occasions when the Safety Car was despatched, owing to the new procedure employed by the organisers to regroup the cars in the different classes each time it was called back in.



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Until the halfway point, it looked as though any of the teams might be capable of winning the centenary Le Mans, including Porsche which was represented by four 963s - three run by Porsche Penske and a private entry. These cars were eventually delayed for a variety of reasons but they were clearly capable of rivalling the Cadillacs, Ferraris, Peugeots and Toyotas running at the sharp end of the order. Peugeot Sport proved competitive on the MICHELIN Pilot Sport Wet and appeared in front for a long period until the #94 9X8 of Duval/Menezes/Muller lost ground due to accident-damage sustained during the hours of darkness. As the conditions dried, however, it became clear that the race was shaping up to become a two-way duel between Ferrari and Toyota.

Split by a mere 15 or so seconds, the #51 Ferrari 499P (Pier Guidi/Calado/Giovinazzi) and #8 Toyota GR010-Hybrid (Buemi/Hartley/Hirakawa) kept the huge crowd entertained for a long period. Two hours from the chequered flag, however, Ryo Hirakawa damaged his Toyota when he crashed into a guardrail. Repairs didn't take long but the incident played into the hands of the reliable Ferrari which went on to take the victory.

*"I would like to congratulate Ferrari on their huge achievement today," said Michelin Motorsport Director **Matthieu Bonardel**. "With the exception of the Chenard & Walcker back in 1923, I can't recall any other team succeeding in winning at Le Mans at first attempt, after a 50-year-long period away! The scrap between Ferrari and Toyota was tremendous and our new range of Hypercar tyres demonstrated that it is possible to combine high performance, longevity and resilience. Our partners were able to run triple-stint strategies and, after careful inspection of their tyres as they came off the cars, we even gave them the green light to do a fourth stint. In the end, however, that wasn't necessary. I would also like to underline the performance and versatility of the new MICHELIN Pilot Sport WET. It contains 45 percent sustainable materials and performed exceptionally in very wet and drying conditions alike. Last but by no means least, today's win was Michelin's 26th straight victory at Le Mans."*

In LMGTE Am, where all the cars chose to compete on Michelin rubber despite the class allowing open competition between tyre brands, victory ended up in the hands of Corvette Racing which was aided by its tyres as it fought its way back up the order after an early problem. Nicky Catsburg, Ben Keating and Nicolas Varrone (#33 Chevrolet Corvette C8.R) were followed over the line by Ahmad Al Harthy/Michael Dinan/Charlie Eastwood (#25 ORT BY TF Aston Martin Vantage) and Michael Wainwright/Benjamin Barker/Riccardo Pera (#86 GR Racing Porsche 911 RSR-19).

The next round of the 2023 FIA World Endurance Championship will take teams to Monza's 'Temple of Speed' in northern Italy on July 9.



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About Michelin

Michelin's ambition is to sustainably improve its customers' mobility. The leader in the mobility sector, Michelin designs, manufactures, and distributes the tires best suited to their requirements and uses as well as services and solutions to improve transport efficacy. Michelin also puts forward offers that allow its customers to enjoy unique moments when traveling. Michelin also develops high-technology equipment intended for multiple fields. Based in Clermont-Ferrand, Michelin is present in 175 countries, employs 132,200 people and operates 67 tire factories that, together, produced approximately 167 million tires in 2022. (www.michelin.com).

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