



PRESS RELEASE

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A strong start to the 2022 FIA World Endurance Championship (FIA WEC) for Michelin at the 1,000 Miles of Sebring

- Alpine Elf Matmut takes advantage of new tyre fitment to take the overall win
- Mission accomplished regarding the consistency of Michelin's new LM GTE tyre range
- Tyre consistency plays major role in Sebring heat

On paper, the first round of the 2022 FIA World Endurance Championship – the 1,000 Miles of Sebring – was supposed to have featured a lights-out-to-flag distance of 1,609.44 kilometres, or a total duration of no more than eight hours. But although the race lived up to its promise in every way, poor weather during the last 60 minutes or so led to a red-flag interruption, and the action was ultimately halted with 14 minutes remaining.

The 6.019km, 17-turn Sebring International Raceway is a former US Army World War 2 airfield and the USA's first permanent circuit. Today, more than seven decades after it hosted action for the first time in 1950, the track is still very fast, as well notoriously bumpy with different types of surface.

It's a setting that contrasts with the FIA WEC's modern-day Hypercars and LM GTEs, the majority of which were running new Michelin tyres for the season's opener. The winning Alpine Elf Matmut-run A480-Gibson, for example, was competing for the first time on 31/71-18 Hypercar tyres on all four corners.

"Alpine Elf Matmut had to adjust its car following its switch to Hypercar tyres from the LMP1 range it raced in 2021," points out **Pierre Alves**, the manager of Michelin's endurance racing programme. "On completion of last year's championship, we worked with them at a number of test sessions so that its drivers could accustom themselves to the new range at a variety of different types of track. That work clearly paid dividends here in Sebring."

The second-placed #8 Toyota GR010-Hybrid was also running a new fitment compared with last season, namely 29/71-18 fronts and 34/71-18 rears, instead of 31/71-18s all-around. This equates to wider tyres for the rear wheels which are driven by the car's internal combustion engine. The #708 Glickenhaus ran the same combination on its way to finishing the second running of the 1,000 Miles of Sebring in third place.



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Tyre consistency across all the conditions encountered in Florida

There was a shift in the weather between the FIA WEC's Prologue sessions at Sebring and the actual opening round of the championship, with cooler temperatures for last weekend's collective pre-season test (less than 15°C) rising to much higher values for the start of the race itself at noon, local time, on Friday, March 18, when Michelin's technicians recorded air and ground temperatures of 33°C and 38°C respectively.

"The figure was higher still for the circuit's asphalt portions," notes **Pierre Alves**. "The properties of the different types of surface that make up Sebring mean that they absorb heat differently, and that has an impact on grip levels. The concrete slabs of the start/finish straight, for example, were slightly cooler than most of the rest of the lap."

The teams competing in the LM GTE Pro class ran an all-new range of slicks which was developed with the delivery of consistent high performance in mind. "The chief aim of our work was not necessarily to post faster lap times because our partners had no issues on that front," explains **Pierre Alves**. "Our focus was more on lap-after-lap consistency, and the data we collected in all the different conditions we saw at Sebring confirms that our engineers achieved just that. Indeed, many of our Pro partners clocked their best laps at the end of second stints on the same tyres, when they were at their most worn."

The 2022 1,000 Miles of Sebring podium finishers

The Hypercar class was won by the #36 Alpine Elf Matmut prototype of André Negrao, Matthieu Vaxivière and Nicolas Lapierre, ahead of the #8 Toyota GR010-Hybrid (Sébastien Buemi/Ryo Hirakawa/Brendon Hartley) and the #708 Glickenhaus (Olivier Pla/Romain Dumas/Ryan Briscoe).

The LM GTE Pro victor was the #92 Porsche 911 RSR 19 of Kevin Estre and Michael Christensen, which finished clear of the Corvette C8.R of Nick Tandy/Tommy Milner and the #91 Porsche 911 RSR 19 of Gianmaria Bruni/Richard Lietz.

The LM GTE Am standings were topped by NorthWest AMR's #98 Aston Martin Vantage AMR (Paul Dalla Lana/David Pittard/Nicki Thiim), ahead of TF Sport's similar #33 car (Marco Sorensen/Ben Keating/Florian Latorre). The #56 Porsche 911 RSR 19 of Brendan Iribe/Olliver Millroy/Ben Barnicoat came third.

All of these cars raced on Michelin tyres.

The next round of the 2022 FIA World Endurance Championship will take teams to Belgium for the TotalEnergies 6 Hours of Spa-Francorchamps on May 7, followed by the Le Mans 24 Hours on June 11-12.



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Michelin's ambition is to improve the mobility of its customers over the long-term. As a leader in the mobility domain, Michelin designs, manufactures and distributes tyres best-suited to customers' needs and uses, as well as services and solutions to enhance vehicle efficiency. Michelin also offers its customers ways to enjoy unique experiences during their journeys and when travelling. In addition, Michelin develops high-tech materials for many sectors of activity. Based in Clermont-Ferrand, Michelin has offices in 177 countries, employs 124,760 people and operates 68 tyre factories which together produced around 173 million tyres in 2021 (www.michelin.com).

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27 cours de l'Île Seguin, 92100 Boulogne-Billancourt, France