MEDIA INFORMATION

FIA World Endurance Championship 2019/2020
8 Hours of Bahrain – Round 8

The LMP1-H prototype era to conclude at the 2020 8 Hours of Bahrain

- ***Tyre strategy expected to play a decisive role in the chase for victory***
- ***Specific tyre allocations for each of the four classes***
- ***Michelin's range for 2021's LMH cars taking shape***

The 8 Hours of Bahrain will serve as backdrop to the final act of the 2019/2020 world endurance season which, despite having been troubled by the Covid-19 pandemic, has been globally successful for Michelin. In addition to securing the FIA WEC titles and victory in all four classes at Le Mans, where its tyres established a new longevity record by completing a quintuple stint on a Rebellion Racing LMP1 prototype, the French brand recently claimed the ELMS crown in LMP2, a category that permits open competition between tyre manufactures.

The coming weekend will also see Michelin wrap up its 2020 IMSA campaign with the Mobil 1 12 Hours of Sebring in Florida, USA. The firm's involvement in the different IMSA-organised series has seen it work successfully with more than 20 different carmakers in the course of what has been a fiercely-contested season that saw it establish a long list of new performance and longevity records.

The 8 Hours of Bahrain is considered to be one of the FIA WEC calendar's most exacting fixtures and, in keeping with tradition, the weather there is expected to be perfect this year again. According to the forecasts, the sky is likely to stay clear during the day as the air and track temperatures climb to more than 30°C and 40°C respectively. The thermometer will then probably fall by around 15°C and 10°C after nightfall, however, and this significant difference is sure to influence tyre choice.

To further complicate the mission faced by drivers, grip levels during the early part of the Middle-East meeting promise to be low due the presence of sand and dust on the track surface, but this coating will gradually dissipate over the three days to add another shifting parameter to the equation.

On top of these considerations, Bahrain International Circuit (length: 5.412km) is a particularly challenging venue, with a mix of straights and slow turns that leads to repeated heavy braking and hard reacceleration, which in turn generate considerable longitudinal constraints. At the same time, tyres need to cope with high lateral forces, since mechanical grip is favoured over aerodynamic downforce.

The tyres chosen by Michelin's partners for the 8 Hours of Bahrain differ as a function of their respective strategies:

- For the **LMP1** cars (the Toyota Gazoo Racing prototypes only), Michelin will provide a combination of SOFT HOT (hot weather) and MEDIUM slicks.

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- Michelin's **LMP2** partners will be able to choose between MEDIUM- and HARD-compound slicks.

- In **LMGTE Pro**, Porsche GT Team and Ferrari/AF Corse have opted for SOFT and MEDIUM slicks, while Aston Martin Racing has specified MEDIUM and MEDIUM HOT slicks.

- In **LMGTE Am**, Porsche and Aston Martin Racing have favoured MEDIUM and MEDIUM HOT slicks, whereas AF Corse has selected SOFT and MEDIUM slicks.

In compliance with the FIA WEC regulations, there is a cap on the number of tyres that are available for qualifying and the race. With the exception of LMGTE Am (34 tyres), a maximum of 26 tyres per car is authorised.

"This year's 8 Hours of Bahrain will go down in endurance racing history as the last race of the LMP1-H era which saw hybrid prototypes rule the roost for nearly a decade," says **Pierre Alves**, the manager of Michelin's endurance racing programmes. "The sport's premier class is set to undergo a significant change next year with the introduction of new LMH cars. Michelin has been working on the tyres for these cars for several months now and our engineers have been making maximum use of simulation technology. Early feedback has been highly encouraging. In accordance with the new technical regulations that will kick in from 2021, Michelin will have two tyre ranges for the LMH teams. The difference concerns their technical characteristics and available sizes in order to address the different demands made by these cars which will feature more variety than today's LMP1 prototypes."

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