

***Michelin – Official partner
of the Le Mans 24 Hours Virtual***

- An exciting new eSports competition to take place on June 13-14, 2020
- An active role for Michelin Motorsport's race team in the inaugural virtual Le Mans
 - eGaming – a new showcase to promote the quality of Michelin tyres

As the lockdown forced upon us by the Covid-19 pandemic begins to ease in many places, fans of eSports and motorsport can look forward to the return of world-class motor racing on June 13-14 thanks to the organisation of the first ever Le Mans 24 Hours Virtual by Le Mans Esports Ltd and the ACO (Automobile Club de l'Ouest). This exciting fixture will see professional teams and drivers compete alongside some of the world's very best eGamers, with action due to kick off with the first free practice session June 10, followed by qualifying and the race itself over the ensuing weekend.

All the cars competing in both classes of the inaugural Le Mans 24 Hours Virtual will race on Michelin tyres.

Michelin was naturally keen to play an active role in the Le Mans 24 Hours Virtual, not only because of the quality of the event but also due to the characteristics of the rFactor 2 platform which convincingly reproduces the central role tyres have long played in the actual race.

The tyre factor will consequently be at the forefront of the teams and drivers' minds as they prepare for this virtual competition, just as it is during the build-up to real thing. Indeed, Michelin is already working with them as they consider different scenarios and seek the most judicious strategies possible that take into account the time of day and the weather – because, as in everyday life, having the right tyre at the right time can make a very big difference!

"Michelin is delighted to be involved with the Le Mans 24 Hours Virtual. It's a great initiative and will run on a quality platform," enthuses Michelin Motorsport director **Mathieu Bonardel**. Michelin is effectively investing increasingly in eGaming in a way that is coherent with its vision as a leading tyre manufacturer and on platforms that mirror the characteristics of real racing tyres and the role they play. "The notions of performance and longevity are core to the Group's commitment to endurance racing and the rFactor 2 simulator takes both onboard," adds **Mathieu Bonardel**. "Delivering performance that lasts is fundamentally important to Michelin and a trademark of our tyres both on and away from the racetrack."

"Michelin will assist the drivers with tyre management during the Le Mans 24 Hours Virtual," explains **Pierre Alves**, the manager of Michelin's endurance racing programmes. "Car crews will consist of four drivers – including sim racers – and, although the pros are accustomed to working with Michelin on their race strategies, this will be something new for their eGamer team-mates. This crossover between virtual racing and the real thing promises to be very stimulating!"



Tyre wear and tyre changes are both factors that will need to be taken into consideration during this process because, as in real endurance racing, it will be possible to multi-stint on the same tyres, thereby saving valuable time during pit stops.

eSports – a brand new way to communicate

As a convincing bridge between race-simulators and reality, the Le Mans 24 Hours Virtual promises to be an effective communications platform to which a broad public will be able to relate. On the one hand, it will provide sim racers with an opportunity to work alongside drivers and teams who are accustomed with the niceties of competing at Le Mans. On the other, this virtual form of the world-famous race will give more traditional motorsport fans a chance to discover eGaming as two worlds and different generations come together.

“The organisers of the Le Mans 24 Hours Virtual have provided Michelin with an attractive support to promote our brand, notably to a younger audience,” notes Michelin Motorsport’s marketing director **Olivier Vialle**. “Through our participation, Michelin will be able to sensitise them to the issues of safety, performance and longevity, as well as to the important contribution tyres can make in these areas when these youngsters come to own a car themselves.”

eSports already play an active part in promoting the Michelin brand. In 2019, for example, the Group signed a partnership agreement with Gran Turismo for Sony PS4. Michelin’s contribution to Gran Turismo Sport and other simulation software and eGaming platforms is founded on its extensive understanding of tyre science and materials, as well as its grasp of simulator technology and virtual tyres. By sharing this knowhow, Michelin can help computer programmers to produce the algorithms needed to reproduce the characteristics of real tyres in digital form.

So, don’t forget to tune in on June 10 as jousting begins in this virtual contest that will see Michelin add success in the inaugural Le Mans 24 Hours Virtual to its victory in the first-ever real Le Mans 24 Hours, in 1923, and its current unbeaten spell of 22 wins in the world’s greatest endurance race.

