



PRESS RELEASE

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TotalEnergies 6 Hours of Spa-Francorchamps: A highly instructive weekend!

- Mixed conditions allowed Michelin's partners to evaluate all of the three tyre compounds available for the Hypercar prototypes
- Cool, damp weather led the teams to run different race-strategies, backed by the experience of Michelin's technical advisors
- After the weekend's highly instructive dress-rehearsal in Belgium, the focus now turns to the build-up to the centenary Le Mans 24 Hours

As always, with the Le Mans 24 Hours looming fast on the horizon, the TotalEnergies 6 Hours of Spa-Francorchamps was eagerly awaited by all the players involved in the FIA World Endurance Championship. The Hypercar field for the Belgian race even featured two additional cars compared with the recent round at Portimao, Portugal, with the addition of a factory Cadillac V-Series.R, plus a third Porsche 963 run by the privateer outfit Hertz Team Jota. All the prototypes in the FIA WEC's headlining class - like the 14 LM GTE Am entries - were equipped with Michelin tyres.

The conditions in the Belgian Ardennes were on the cool side, and the teams and drivers had to contend with nearly all four seasons over the three days of free practice, qualifying and the race itself. That said, the mix provided them with an opportunity to evaluate Michelin's entire endurance-racing range. *"Looking at the weather forecasts ahead of the trip to Belgium, it was impossible to pick out just two of the three compounds available for the Hypercars, which is what the regulations require,"* reports **Pierre Alves**, the manager of Michelin's endurance racing programmes. *"So, in consultation with the ACO and FIA, it was decided to take all our Hypercar specifications to Spa-Francorchamps, on both sporting and safety grounds. Irrespective of the weather question, tyres effectively have to cope with exceptionally big loads through certain parts of this demanding circuit; like Eau Rouge, for example, where the rear-left is subjected to a downforce of 1.5 tonnes at more than 280kph. That's something that has to be taken into account during the development stage, and it's also crucial to provide the drivers with a choice that covers all the likely conditions. In the end, we saw how tyre strategy played a big role in the success of today's winners."*



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The undulating, 7.004-kilometre, 19-turn circuit of Spa-Francorchamps is a notoriously challenging venue, but one the drivers enjoy. The weather was unsettled for the start of the race and lingering damp sections prompted some teams to fit rain tyres, while others chose the Soft slick, which is the option that climbs in temperature the most quickly. After lights-out, the #3 Cadillac was the first car to double-stint on this compound, but significant use was also made of the Medium which showcased its longevity once again. In the course of the six hours, all of Michelin's partners doubled-stinted on the different types of tyre available, occasionally even combining different compounds as a function of their respective plans and allocations.

*"We were able to collect a significant amount of information, so that was perfect for both the Hypercar and LM GTE Am teams ahead of Le Mans," noted **Pierre Alves**. "Overall, it was a tough weekend but it allowed us to confirm the value of the technical advice and support we give our partners and - for the first time this year - we were also able to harvest good race-data in cold conditions - potentially comparable with a night stint at Le Mans."*

The 2023 TotalEnergies 6 Hours of Spa-Francorchamps was won by the #7 Toyota GR 010 Hybrid of José Maria Lopez/Mike Conway/Kamui Kobayashi, ahead of its #8 sister car in the hands of Sébastien Buemi/Brendon Hartley/Ryo Hirakawa. Third was the Ferrari AF Corse #51 Ferrari 499P (Alessandro Pier Guidi/James Calado/Antonio Giovinazzi).

The day's LM GTE Am winners were Richard Mille Racing's Lilou Wadoux, Luis Perez Companc and Alessio Rovera (Ferrari 488 GTE EVO). Benjamin Keating/Nicolas Varrone/Nicky Catsburg (Corvette Racing Corvette C8.R) were second over the line, with the ORT by TF #25 Aston Martin Vantage AMR of Charlie Eastwood/Ahmad Al Harthy/Michael Dinan securing third spot.

The next round of the 2023 FIA World Endurance Championship will be the centenary Le Mans 24 Hours in France on June 10-11, preceded by the official pre-Le Mans test on June 4.

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.



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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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