



PRESS RELEASE

MOTORSPORT

Sakhir (Bahrain), November 4, 2023

## ***8 Hours of Bahrain*** **The hard-compound MICHELIN Pilot Sport reveals its performance credentials and resilience at abrasive Sakhir**

- Sébastien Buemi/Brendon Hartley/Ryo Hirakawa (#8 Toyota GR010 Hybrid) spearhead a one-two finish for Toyota Gazoo Racing to claim the 2023 FIA World Endurance Championship Drivers' crowns.
- An entertaining fight for third between Ferrari and Porsche keeps fans on their toes throughout the race's second half.
- Iron Dames' Sarah Bovy, Michelle Gatting and Rahel Frey secure the first FIA WEC victory of an all-women crew as the LMGTE Am class bows out in Bahrain.

The 2023 FIA World Endurance Championship concluded with the 8 Hours of Bahrain. The race produced a Toyota Gazoo Racing one-two as the Japanese outfit provided a further demonstration of the quality of its Hypercar prototype, drivers and squad. Victory for its #8 GR010 Hybrid enabled its crew Sébastien Buemi, Brendon Hartley and Ryo Hirakawa to clinch the 2023 Drivers' title, while teammates Mike Conway/Kamui Kobayashi/José Maria Lopez (#7) came second overall in Bahrain.

Toyota Gazoo Racing's race-long tyre management paid dividends. For the first six-and-a-half hours, Michelin's Japanese partner took advantage of the speed and consistency of the hard-compound MICHELIN Pilot Sport, before switching to the medium variant for its cars' less-exposed right-hand wheels for the last 90 minutes.

While the two Toyotas made their mark, a thrilling scrap for third saw the #50 AF Corse Ferrari 499P (Fuoco/Molina/Nielsen) and #38 Hertz Team Jota Porsche 963 (Da Costa/Stevens/Ye) keep fans entertained. The Ferrari trio was ultimately rewarded with a footing on the year's final podium, albeit just one second ahead of their chasers!

Sakhir International Circuit is notorious for having the most abrasive track surface of the calendar and the additional tyre-wear resulting from the coating of sand blown in from the surrounding desert is a familiar phenomenon. At the same time, the 5.412-kilometre lap features a variety of slow and fast turns (5 left/10 right) that lead to repeated heavy braking and hard re-acceleration, adding to the challenged faced by tyres.



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*"It was no surprise to see the teams favour our hard compound for practically the entire race as the track temperature remained consistently above to 30°C, even after sunset," observes **Pierre Alves**, the manager of Michelin's endurance-racing programmes. "Given the circuit's abrasiveness, the performance of our tyres and the consistency of the lap times over the eight hours was quite remarkable. The possibility of wear meant that managing the double stints was a complex business, especially with regard to the cars' left-hand tyres which are exposed to the biggest constraints here at Sakhir. All the Hypercar teams systematically changed their left-hand tires, and Toyota Gazoo Racing only switched to the medium compound for the last hour-and-a-half, and even then only for the right hand wheels."*

The 2023 8 Hours of Bahrain also marked the final chance to enjoy the show provided by the sport's LMGTE Am cars which will be superseded by the new LM GT3 class from 2024, with Michelin no longer involved.

Paying tribute to the teams that have competed in this category which has always permitted open competition between tyre brands, **Pierre Alves** said: *"I take this opportunity to convey my gratitude to all our partners who chose Michelin for the 85 races that have been contested since the FIA WEC was first organised in 2012. In total, they won 78 of them. So a huge thank you to the drivers, teams and carmakers with whom I and my team of Technical Advisors had the pleasure of working hand-in-hand all these years."*

### **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](http://www.michelin.com)).

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