



PRESS RELEASE

MOTORSPORT

Paris (France), November 15, 2023

## **Qatar Airways Grand Prix of Qatar Brand new asphalt and many unknowns**

- Usually taking place at the start of the season, this year the Qatar MotoGP™ Grand Prix is the 19th and penultimate round of the championship.
- The circuit has been completely resurfaced, generating a reset of almost all the data previously stored.
- Uniquely, the Tissot Sprint and the Grand Prix will take place at night, with lower track temperatures than during the day, and a tyre strategy to be refined.

Since 2004, the first year that the Emirate of Qatar hosted the MotoGP World Championship, the Grand Prix has mainly taken place at the start of the season. This year, given the major work carried out at the circuit, the race was postponed to the end of the year. As a result, the competitors will discover a completely new venue due to the infrastructure having been completely replaced, as well as the track being completely resurfaced. In terms of weather, it will still be hot during the day so this change of date will have no impact, especially as the Tissot Sprint and the Grand Prix will take place at night, with a start scheduled at 8 p.m. (local time), or 6 p.m. in Europe.

For the Michelin Motorsport teams, accustomed to the logistical challenges and different specificities of many circuits around the world, this Grand Prix is special. It will take place on asphalt where no Grand Prix motorcycle has ever ridden - as the schedule did not allow for the organization of tests - and even if the layout remains the same, the new asphalt will bring new challenges. The 5.38 km long Losail circuit comprises 16 turns, including 10 to the right, and it has a straight of more than a kilometre where competitors exceed 330 km/h.

*"The new surface means everything to be redone, or almost, in terms of choice of tyres and set-up of the motorcycles," states **Piero Taramasso**, Michelin two-wheel competition manager. "As we know nothing about this new asphalt, we have provided in accordance with the technical regulations, an additional tyre specification. Therefore, our MotoGP partners will have the opportunity to test four front specifications instead of three, and three rears rather than the usual two. In addition, Qatar has the particularity of staging a race at the end of the day, when night has fallen. In Losail, which is in the middle of the desert, the ground temperature drops after sunset, going from 45°C to less than 20°C in a fairly short period of time."*



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*"We are going to work in the opposite way to what we usually do, by putting the hardest tyres on track first, then the riders will refine their choices by introducing increasingly softer options in order to identify the best operating windows. For our part, we will need to understand as quickly as possible the wear rates and what thermal conditions will be generated by this new track in order to best advise our partners on the choice of tyres for each situation. Another critical point to take into account is the sand blown onto the track by the wind, which increases abrasiveness. Given our experience on the Losail circuit, we are not entering completely unknown territory and we have confidence in the tyres that we will bring, but it is certain that these changes raise some questions, which we are keen to answer!"*

### **Tyres selected for the Qatar Grand Prix**

Michelin partners will have the opportunity to test two different Hard compound front tyres, a Medium and a Soft, from the MICHELIN Power Slick range, all of which will have a symmetrical structure. For the rear, three compounds (Soft, Medium and Hard) will be available. The Soft and Medium compounds will be asymmetrical, while the Hard will be symmetrical.

Concerning the MICHELIN Power Rain range, the French manufacturer will supply Soft and Medium compounds in Qatar for both the front (symmetrical) and rear (asymmetrical).

Regardless of the compound or range, all asymmetrical tyres will benefit from a reinforced right shoulder, to take into account the greater number of turns in this direction.

On the Losail circuit, the Grand Prix motorcycles will enter the track for a first 45-minute free practice session on Friday 17 November at 3:45 p.m. A second session, this time one hour long and counting towards qualifying, will take place at 8 p.m., and this will allow the 10 fastest riders to move directly into Q2. On Saturday, the action will take place from 3 p.m. with a 30-minute free practice session, then Q1 and Q2 qualifying sessions (15 minutes each), followed by the Tissot Sprint (11 laps) at 8 p.m. The 22-lap Grand Prix will take place at 8 p.m. on Sunday, following a 10-minute warm-up during the afternoon.

### **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.



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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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