



PRESS RELEASE

MOTORSPORT

Paris (France), March 6, 2024

## ***Qatar Airways Grand Prix of Qatar*** **The 2024 FIM MotoGP™ World Championship begins on one of the most abrasive track surfaces of the season**

- The Qatar Airways Grand Prix of Qatar returns as the season opener.
- Resurfaced in 2023, the circuit is characterized by highly abrasive asphalt which impacts tyre strategy.
- The Sprint race (7:00 p.m. start) and the Grand Prix (8:00 p.m. start) take place in the evening, with cooler track conditions than during the day.

Taking place towards the end of last season due to renovation work on the circuit (the penultimate race on the calendar), the Qatar Airways Grand Prix of Qatar reopens hostilities this year, as was always the case in the past. The bikes have evolved significantly compared to 2023 with even more aerodynamics, many top riders have changed teams and the 2023 Moto2 champion, Pedro Acosta, is now at Red Bull GASGAS Tech 3, Michelin tyres sport new rubber compounds and a new 'HARD+' front specification will be available for several Grands Prix this season. The list of new features for 2024 is therefore long, so the anticipation for this first race is strong in the hearts of all racing enthusiasts... and even among paddock professionals.

For 20 years, the Emirate of Qatar has hosted the MotoGP World Championship at the Lusail International Circuit, located just a few kilometres from the capital Doha. Also visited by other world-class disciplines such as Formula 1 and the FIA-WEC, the venue received a substantial makeover in 2023. Now, in addition to offering new, more welcoming buildings, version 2.0 of the 5.38 km circuit, features its renewed surface. Last year this Grand Prix represented a leap into the unknown for the teams and Michelin because the characteristics of the new asphalt remained to be discovered, but this year we know from our data that the new surface is fast... but very abrasive. The size and shape of the stones which constitute the upper layer of asphalt (what we call macro-roughness) provide a good level of grip, but affect the consistency and longevity of even the most durable tyres.



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In 2023 the riders selected the hard MICHELIN Power Slicks at the front and rear, and these worked well in both the Sprint and Grand Prix without incident, with new lap record times being set.

In terms of weather, the return of the Qatar Airways Grand Prix of Qatar in March favours meteorological stability, as last November intense storms drenched the region during the evenings. As is always the case, the Sprint race and the Grand Prix will take place after sunset, with a 7:00 p.m. start (local time) for the Sprint (11 laps) and an 8:00 p.m. start for the Grand Prix (22 laps).

To navigate the 16 corners of the Lusail International Circuit, including 10 right-handers, and reach top speeds in excess of 330 km/h on the pit straight, MotoGP riders have at their disposal an allocation consisting of three compounds of symmetrical front tyres (SOFT, MEDIUM and HARD) and two compounds for the rear (SOFT and MEDIUM), with the SOFT being asymmetrical - featuring a reinforced right side. Regarding the MICHELIN Power Rain range, Michelin has brought SOFT and MEDIUM compounds to Qatar for both the front (symmetrical) and the rear (asymmetrical, with a reinforced right side).

*"We refined the tyre allocation for Qatar during the official tests in February," says **Piero Taramasso**, Michelin two-wheel competition manager. "We now know the characteristics of the new Lusail asphalt, which compared to last year has made our task easier, particularly when choosing the compounds. In addition to the abrasiveness of this track, we must take into account that the test and qualification sessions will take place during the day on a very hot track (over 45°C), which should direct the riders towards harder tyres, probably with a SOFT back-up choice for qualifying. The Sprint race and the Grand Prix are scheduled for the evening, and the SOFT rear tyre could be an option, particularly for the 11 laps of the Sprint. The final parameter to consider in the tyre strategy is the sand blown in by the wind, which is likely to amplify the already high abrasiveness, while significantly reducing the overall level of grip. Due to the evolution of the bikes and the increased performance displayed during official tests by the new 2024 Michelin rubber compounds, if conditions permit, we expect to add more new records to our already extensive tally."*

On the Lusail circuit, the MotoGP riders will take to the track for a first 45-minute free practice session on Friday 8 March at 3:45 p.m. (local time). 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 to Q2. On Saturday, the action will take place from 2 p.m., with a 30-minute free practice session followed by Q1 and Q2 qualifying (15 minutes each), then the 11-lap Sprint race at 7 p.m. The Grand Prix (22 laps) will take place on Sunday at 8 p.m., after a 10-minute warm-up scheduled for the afternoon.



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### **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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