



PRESS RELEASE

MOTORSPORT

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6 Hours of Imola

Michelin's FIA WEC range provides the drivers with the confidence needed for Imola's surprising mixed weather

- The winners of Round 2 of the 2024 FIA World Endurance Championship were Toyota Gazoo Racing's Kamui Kobayashi, Mike Conway and Nyck de Vries in their Michelin-equipped Toyota GR010 Hybrid.
- The #50 Ferrari 499P ran for 129 laps (equivalent to 630 kilometres) at the top-end of the leaderboard on a single set of MICHELIN Pilot Sports, providing further proof of the long-lasting performance credentials of Michelin's world-class endurance racing tyres.
- New colour-coded markings on the sidewalls of the Hypercar prototypes' MICHELIN Pilot Sport tyres helped make team strategies clearer for the sport's professionals and fans.

Round 2 of the 2024 FIA WEC was the championship's first visit to Imola where Michelin Motorsport provided the Hypercar teams with a choice between the medium- and hard-compound versions of the MICHELIN Pilot Sport. In a surprising turn, however, the weather proved much poorer than expected, with chilly temperatures and occasionally heavy showers compelling competitors to review their respective, pre-established strategies.

On race day, rain began to fall with two hours remaining. Until then, the track temperature had oscillated between 16°C and 35°C, prompting Michelin's partners to focus on the medium-compound option, with some using the hard variant for the cars' right-side wheels which are subjected to the biggest constraints around the Italian venue. When wet weather swept over the circuit, Michelin's rain tyre – which features the same internal construction as the slicks – helped the drivers to keep up a fast pace in spite of the reduced grip. Then, when the racing line began to dry during the last hour, some partners reverted to pre-used medium slicks to maintain their pushes to the flag.

*"When our tyres for Imola were produced, it's true that we expected better weather," says **Pierre Alves**, the manager of Michelin's endurance racing programmes. "That said, our medium compound is exceptionally versatile and covers a very wide temperature range, so we knew we had a broad spectrum of situations covered. The way the race unfolded called for smart strategic thinking, not only with regard to the number of stints but also regarding the occasional use – or otherwise – of the hard slick for the cars' right-hand wheels. Mid-race, certain teams retrieved the tyres they had used in qualifying to optimise their respective allocations."*



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Track temperature had a significant influence on strategies, as did the rule that outlaws the use of tyre warmers, as well as the number of covers that the regulations authorise each car to run (12 for practice, plus 18 for the race).

*"The drivers need tyres that enable them to make fewer changes and that's what we provide," adds **Pierre Alves**. "This is not only to spend as little time as possible in the pits, but also to avoid having to spend two or three laps getting fresh tyres up to temperature after a change. In this respect, our tyres are conceived to give their very best throughout their time on the car, and many of our partners chose to make maximum use of this quality in Italy. Imola isn't particularly hard-wearing, so we saw a significant amount of triple stinting, and even some quadruple stints. The #50 Ferrari 499P of Antonio Fuoco/Miguel Molina/Nicklas Nielsen, which spent more than half of the race lapping at the front end of the field, completed 129 laps of the 4.9-kilometre, 21-turn circuit on a single set of tyres at one stage. That's 632 kilometres. Given the high average speeds and levels of aerodynamic downforce we see in endurance racing, that's something of a performance!"*

Tyre strategies easier to follow

Italy's round of the 2024 FIA WEC saw Michelin Motorsport introduce new colour-coded sidewall markings that indicate which compounds are being used. Yellow, for example, denotes the medium MICHELIN Pilot Sport, while red shows the hard option and white the soft, with blue employed for the rain tyre. The system will be used from now on for all of Michelin's endurance racing programmes to make understanding strategies simpler, whether a car is moving or at a standstill.

The 6 Hours of Imola was won by Toyota Gazoo Racing's Kamui Kobayashi/Mike Conway/Nyck de Vries in the #7 Toyota GR010 Hybrid, ahead of the #6 Porsche 963 (Kevin Estre/André Lotterer/Laurens Vanthoor). Third place went to the similar #5 Porsche Penske Motorsport prototype of Matt Campbell/ Michael Christensen/Frédéric Makowiecki.

The next round of the FIA World Endurance Championship will take teams to Belgium for the TotalEnergies 6 Hours of Spa-Francorchamps on May 9-11.



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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).

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