



PRESS RELEASE

MOTORSPORT

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TotalEnergies 6 Hours of Spa-Francorchamps **Soft and medium MICHELIN Pilot Sport slicks for the FIA WEC's Hypercar prototypes in Belgium**

- The MICHELIN Pilot Sport range for endurance racing's Hypercar prototypes returns to Belgium's roller-coaster, this time with coloured sidewalls to indicate which compounds the cars are running at any given moment.
- Spa-Francorchamps is the FIA WEC venue that generates the highest loads on tires, notably on the rear left through Turn 4 (Eau Rouge).
- Michelin has studied the weather at the circuit over the past 10 years in a bid to establish a more accurate forecast and identify the most suitable compounds.

After two rounds at venues that were new to the calendar (i.e. Qatar early March, and Imola, Italy, mid-April), the FIA World Endurance Championship returns to familiar ground this week. Spa-Francorchamps is effectively the first circuit of 2024 where the Hypercars actually raced last season. That time, exceptionally, Michelin Motorsport provided a choice of three compounds, as opposed to the two permitted by a new rule that was introduced for 2023. That year was also the first visit of Michelin's new endurance range to the Belgian circuit, and three options gave the teams a wider scope of set-up possibilities in temperatures that were likely to be the lowest of the campaign.

Based on data from that race and an analysis of the weather encountered in Belgium's Ardennes these past 10 years, Michelin Motorsport will only have two slick options this time around for the 19 Hypercars fielded by nine different carmakers. They are the soft and medium versions of the MICHELIN Pilot Sport. The weather study revealed that the average temperature over the three days during this period is around 15/17°C and suggested that rain is to be expected at least once in the course of the meeting.

*"The overall package of two types of slick plus our rain tyre enables us to cover all the likely conditions for what is invariably a great race," notes **Pierre Alves**, manager of Michelin Motorsport's endurance racing programmes. "Our experience here last year enabled us to eliminate the hard-compound option this time. Without tyre warmers, which are now banned by the regulations, getting heat into it could have been delicate, while the decision to take the soft and medium allows a variety of race strategies."*



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"Spa-Francorchamps is the second-fastest circuit of the season after Le Mans, with average speeds of around 198/200kph, and the track's surface is reasonably hard-wearing. We don't see anyone triple stinting their rears because the rear-left is subjected to the highest load recorded during the season, through the Eau Rouge compression – 1.2 tonnes. Spa-Francorchamps is also a high-energy circuit for tyres due to its eight fast corners. But there are also slower portions and long straights that result in the tyres' cooling. That's why the compound choice based on the weather, car set-ups and driving styles has so much influence on strategy which tends to be fine-tuned as the race progresses. Last but not least, the 6 Hours of Spa-Francorchamps traditionally serves as a full-scale dress-rehearsal ahead of Le Mans and, as such, will enable us to look at the optimal operating window of our soft slick with Circuit de la Sarthe in mind."

The 7.004-kilometre, 19-turn circuit was partially resurfaced in 2022 for safety reasons, yet it continues to stand out as one of the calendar's most challenging and unpredictable venues because of its layout and location. To make it easier for teams and spectators to monitor which compounds the cars are running, the sidewalls of Michelin's tyres now feature coloured markings (white = soft / yellow = medium / blue = rain tyre).

Michelin's partners have a total allocation of 30 slicks for Spa-Francorchamps: 12 for free practice, plus 18 for qualifying and the race. The 10 cars that contest the Hyperpole shoot-out will be given four additional soft Pilot Sports that Michelin will recover after the session for private testing purposes at a later date.

After two free practice sessions (11:30am and 5:30pm) on Thursday, May 9, Friday's programme covers FP3 (11:00am) and Qualifying (from 3:30pm). The race itself is scheduled to start at 1:00pm on Saturday, May 11.

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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