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6 Hours of Imola

Michelin kicks off its 2026 FIA WEC season in Italy with the Prologue and the 6 Hours of Imola

- The 2026 FIA World Endurance Championship (FIA WEC) begins in Europe at the Autodromo di Imola Enzo e Dino Ferrari, with the Prologue (April 14) followed by the 6 Hours of Imola (April 17–19).
- Michelin Motorsport will leverage the eight hours of Prologue testing to refine its understanding of the new MICHELIN Pilot Sport Endurance range in real-world conditions.
- MICHELIN Pilot Sport Endurance tires equip the entire Hypercar field, where manufacturers will compete in the opening round of the 2026 season.

Following the rescheduling of the Qatar 1812 Km to the end of the year, the FIA World Endurance Championship launches its 2026 season in Europe, at the Imola circuit. For the third consecutive year, the 4.9 km Italian track, with its 21 corners, welcomes Hypercar prototypes, now entering a season that begins in a highly demanding strategic and technical context.

A strategic Prologue to launch the season

A major addition to the 2026 calendar, the Prologue will take place at Imola just days before the race, offering teams and Michelin Motorsport eight hours of intensive running in conditions close to competition.

This session represents a valuable opportunity to deepen tire understanding, particularly at the start of the season when benchmarks are still being established. It will also allow strategies to be fine-tuned according to the specific characteristics of the circuit.

Unique technical conditions at Imola

The Italian circuit presents an atypical profile within the FIA WEC calendar. Relatively low in energy demand for tires, it nonetheless places significant stress on them during acceleration phases.

Hypercars make extensive use of curbs to optimize racing lines, which generates high mechanical loads on the tires. In addition, with overtaking opportunities limited, overall performance relies heavily on strategic tire management.

In this context, the ability to complete multiple stints on the same set of tires becomes a decisive advantage, reducing time spent in the pits and optimizing track position.

The new MICHELIN Pilot Sport Endurance range debuts at Imola

For this opening round of the 2026 season, Michelin is providing its Hypercar partners with its new MICHELIN Pilot Sport Endurance range, making its FIA WEC debut.

Teams will rely on Soft and Medium compounds, whose characteristics will be analyzed in depth from the Prologue onwards.

"The Imola Prologue represents an extremely valuable opportunity for us and our partners," explains **Pierre Alves**, Michelin Endurance program manager.

"Having eight hours of running just before the race weekend allows us to assess tire performance with great precision, particularly the Soft and Medium compounds. We will pay close attention to their warm-up behavior, which is a key factor at a circuit like Imola, as well as their consistency over time.

At this time of year, weather conditions can be highly variable, adding an extra strategic dimension. It is therefore essential to offer tires capable of adapting to a wide range of situations.

Imola remains a relatively low-energy circuit, but one that imposes strong acceleration loads. Hypercars also make extensive use of curbs, which increases mechanical stress on the tires.

Finally, as overtaking is particularly difficult here, tire strategy plays a central role. The ability to complete multiple stints on a single set of tires becomes a major performance lever, saving valuable time during pit stops. These are precisely the areas where we will support our partners throughout the weekend."

Technical fairness serving competition

As in previous seasons, Michelin will exclusively supply all Hypercars competing in FIA WEC. Each prototype benefits from a regulated tire allocation, ensuring sporting fairness and strategic control.

Each Hypercar will be allocated 12 tires for Free Practice, 4 tires for Hyperpole, and 18 tires for Qualifying and the race.

MICHELIN Pilot Sport Endurance tires are available in the following dimensions:

- 29/71-18 (front)
- 34/71-18 (rear)

In wet conditions, a dedicated MICHELIN Pilot Sport rain range will also be available in the same dimensions.

Weekend schedule – FIA WEC 2026, Imola

The Prologue will take place on Tuesday, April 14, with eight hours of running throughout the day.

The 6 Hours of Imola race weekend will follow this schedule:

- **Friday**, April 17: Free Practice 1 (10:15) and Free Practice 2 (15:15)
- **Saturday**, April 18: Free Practice 3 (10:30), Hypercar Qualifying (15:10), Hyperpole (15:30)
- **Sunday**, April 19: 6 Hours of Imola race start at 13:00

As the opening round of the 2026 season, this Italian event will set the tone for a championship where technical mastery, strategy, and tire management will be more central to performance than ever.

About Michelin

Michelin is building a world-leading manufacturer of life-changing composites and experiences. Pioneering engineered materials for more than 130 years, Michelin is uniquely positioned to make decisive contributions to human progress and to a more sustainable world. Drawing on its deep know-how in polymer composites, Michelin is constantly innovating to manufacture high-quality tires and components for critical applications in demanding fields as varied as mobility, construction, aeronautics, low-carbon energies, and healthcare. The care placed in its products and deep customer knowledge inspire Michelin to offer the finest experiences. This spans from providing data- and AI-based connected solutions for professional fleets to recommending outstanding restaurants and hotels curated by the MICHELIN Guide. Headquartered in Clermont-Ferrand, France, Michelin is present in 175 countries and employs 129,800 people. (www.michelin.com).


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