

Imola (Italy), April 19, 2026

**6 Hours of Imola**  
**Michelin confirms the strengths of the new MICHELIN Pilot Sport Endurance range at the 6 Hours of Imola**

- Following a strategic Prologue, Michelin validates in race conditions the performance and versatility of the new MICHELIN Pilot Sport Endurance range, made with 50% renewable and recycled materials.
- A close and competitive race, marked by changing weather conditions towards the end and complex multi-stint tire strategies.
- The fast warm-up, strong consistency, and versatility of the new Michelin tires were praised by Hypercar teams and drivers.

After the Prologue held on April 14, the 2026 FIA World Endurance Championship (FIA WEC) officially kicked off its season this weekend at the Autodromo Enzo e Dino Ferrari, during the 6 Hours of Imola (April 17–19).

In both representative and evolving conditions, Michelin Motorsport was able to validate in real race situations the performance of its new MICHELIN Pilot Sport Endurance range, incorporating 50% renewable and recycled materials. Introduced for the first time in FIA WEC, the range demonstrated its full potential on a traditional, fast, and demanding circuit.

**A highly informative Prologue**

Held a few days before the race, the Prologue provided a total of eight hours of intensive testing for teams and Michelin Motorsport. This session helped refine tire understanding under contrasting conditions, particularly with a rain-affected morning.

In this context, teams were able to explore different setups and gather valuable data, essential for preparing for a race where tire strategy would prove decisive.

**An extremely close starting grid**

Qualifying confirmed the high level of competitiveness in the Hypercar field. Pole position went to Ferrari AF Corse, with an incredibly narrow margin of just 0.011 seconds over Toyota Racing.

The top four cars were separated by less than a tenth of a second, and the entire 17-car field was covered by only two seconds.

### **A strategic race from start to finish**

Held in front of 92,175 spectators, the 6 Hours of Imola began in ideal weather conditions, with track temperatures reaching 34°C, encouraging a wide variety of tire strategies.

The entire Hypercar field, equipped by Michelin, made use of the different combinations offered by the new MICHELIN Pilot Sport Endurance range. Soft tires, Medium tires, mixed or split setups depending on axle—each team optimized its choices based on its own approach, calculations, and objectives.

Most competitors opted for double stints early in the race, before evolving towards more complex strategies, including precise tire management on each side of the car, even down to individual positions.

The race featured numerous lead changes, notably involving Ferrari, Toyota, and Cadillac, illustrating the intensity and uncertainty of this opening round of the 2026 FIA WEC season.

### **Evolving weather conditions highlight Michelin's versatility**

Mid-race, as track temperatures reached high levels (up to 40°C), Medium tires demonstrated excellent consistency, allowing teams to complete multiple stints without any sign of degradation.

The end of the race was marked by rapidly changing weather conditions, with a significant drop in track temperature (down to 25°C) and the onset of light, localized rain.

In this context, teams mostly switched to Soft tires, confirming their ability to deliver performance and grip in cooler and more unpredictable conditions.

Some bold strategies also emerged, such as Toyota #7 completing a full triple stint—105 laps—on Medium tires, showcasing the exceptional endurance potential of the new Michelin range.

### **Toyota Racing takes victory after a perfectly controlled race**

After six hours of racing, victory went to the #8 Toyota TR010 Hybrid (Buemi/Hartley/Hirakawa), ahead of the #51 Ferrari 499P (Pier Guidi, Calado, Giovinazzi) and the #7 Toyota TR010 Hybrid (Conway, Kobayashi, De Vries), in a race where strategic management and consistency made the difference.

**Pierre Alves**, Endurance Manager, Michelin Motorsport

*"We witnessed a particularly intense, open, and unpredictable race right up to the final moments, making it an excellent start to the 2026 FIA WEC season."*

*This Imola weekend was extremely important for Michelin Motorsport, as it marked the FIA WEC debut of our new MICHELIN Pilot Sport Endurance range. Between the Prologue and the race, we were able to gather a very significant amount of data under highly varied conditions, ranging from a cold and slightly damp track early in the week to temperatures close to 40°C during the race, followed by a marked cooling at the end.*

*Driver feedback has been very positive, particularly regarding tire warm-up, grip levels, and consistency over time.*

*We saw teams complete double and even triple stints, both with Medium compounds in hot conditions and with Soft tires when the track began to cool. This demonstrates the versatility of our range, capable of adapting to very different conditions while maintaining a high level of performance.*

*Another particularly interesting point concerns the fine management of performance, with differentiated strategies depending on tire positions on the car. This illustrates how teams are now fully exploiting the potential of our tires to optimize overall performance.*

*We leave Imola with an extremely solid technical foundation for the rest of the season. The lessons learned here will enable us to support our partners even more effectively at upcoming events, starting with Spa-Francorchamps, with a view to preparing as best as possible for the 24 Hours of Le Mans.”*

### **Heading to Spa-Francorchamps**

After this highly informative opening round, Michelin and its partners now turn their attention to the next championship event: the TotalEnergies 6 Hours of Spa-Francorchamps (May 7–9, 2026). A key race in preparation for the 24 Hours of Le Mans, the highlight of the endurance racing season.

#### **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](http://www.michelin.com)).



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