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24 Hours of Le Mans 2026
MICHELIN Pilot Sport 2026 Tyres: Michelin Reaches a New Technological Milestone at the 24 Hours of Le Mans

- For the 94th edition of the 24 Hours of Le Mans, Michelin is taking a new technological step forward with its latest MICHELIN Pilot Sport Endurance range, incorporating 50% renewable and recycled materials.
- Never before has a tyre featuring such a bold technological achievement been used in a competition such as the FIA World Endurance Championship (FIA WEC), whose flagship event is the 24 Hours of Le Mans.
- More than ever, Michelin is using motorsport as an innovation accelerator, where technologies developed through simulation and on-track competition enable the transfer of advanced solutions to road tyres.

Editorial – Matthieu Bonardel, Director of Michelin Motorsport

Technological Excellence and Environmental Responsibility Advancing Together Through Michelin Innovation

For more than a century, Michelin has used motorsport as an innovation accelerator serving the future of mobility. Through the duration of races, the consistency required and the extreme demands placed on tyres, endurance racing provides a unique environment for developing ever more advanced technologies, many of which can ultimately be transferred to road vehicles.

Michelin's commitment to the FIA World Endurance Championship is fully aligned with our "All Sustainable" strategy. The Group aims to manufacture tyres made exclusively from renewable and recycled materials by 2050, with an initial milestone of 40% sustainable materials by 2030. In a large-scale industrial context, motorsport serves as a pioneering laboratory, enabling innovative solutions to be tested and validated rapidly under extreme conditions.

Since the introduction of the Hypercar category, the MICHELIN Pilot Sport Endurance tyres developed for these cars have distinguished themselves through their performance, durability and versatility. The 2026 range incorporates 50% renewable and recycled materials while maintaining – and in some areas enhancing – the fundamental performance standards that define Michelin tyres.

This development is based on a complete redesign of tyre compounds and extensive use of digital simulation, allowing technical trade-offs to be mastered from the earliest stages of development. Beyond the tyre itself, the FIA WEC provides Michelin with a strategic platform for demonstration and collaboration across the entire automotive ecosystem. It enables innovations developed on the racetrack to be transformed into practical solutions that contribute to more sustainable mobility.

Unprecedented Development Programme and Ambitious Objectives

The development of this new Endurance tyre range, introduced at the start of the season during the 6 Hours of Imola (Italy), was built around two complementary ambitions: significantly increasing the proportion of sustainable materials incorporated into the tyres while enhancing their overall performance and improving their environmental footprint throughout their life cycle.

The programme's main objectives were as follows:

- **Increase the proportion of renewable and recycled materials in the tyres from 20% to 50%**, representing a major technological milestone;
- **Improve tyre warm-up performance** in a context where tyre pre-heating is no longer permitted under the regulations;
- **Further enhance both durability and performance consistency**, while broadening the overlap between the different tyre specifications to provide teams with greater strategic flexibility;
- **Preserve the exceptionally high level of performance** that made the previous generation such a success.

This approach has enabled the development of a new generation of tyres combining enhanced sustainability, greater versatility and an efficiency level that remains fully aligned with the highest standards of modern endurance racing.

The 2026 24 Hours of Le Mans Through the Eyes of Pierre Alves, Michelin Endurance Programmes Manager

"Our new Endurance range was validated through an extensive testing programme conducted in Europe and the United States before being proven under race conditions in North America and subsequently at Imola and Spa-Francorchamps.

The initial findings have been extremely encouraging. In particular, we have observed significant progress in warm-up performance, meaning the tyres are able to reach their optimum operating window much more quickly once they leave the pit lane.

Our greatest satisfaction, however, comes from the broader operating temperature ranges delivered by our new compounds. The Soft compound now retains its full potential at temperatures approaching 30°C, while the Medium compound remains fully competitive down to approximately 15°C. In practical terms, this means that between 15°C and 25°C both compounds deliver very similar levels of performance, opening up new strategic opportunities for our partners. At a circuit such as Le Mans, where track abrasiveness remains relatively low and tyre wear is naturally limited, this versatility will prove to be a particularly valuable advantage.

For this first season with the new-generation tyres, we will recommend that our partners focus on triple-stint strategies while we continue to build a deeper understanding of compound behaviour across all race conditions. Naturally, teams wishing to explore more ambitious strategies involving four stints or more will be able to do so with the support and expertise of our Trackside Technical Advisors.

The Official Test Day will be particularly important. The morning session will primarily serve to clean the track and accelerate its evolution, as the full 13.6-kilometre circuit will still have very little rubber laid down. The afternoon session will therefore provide invaluable insights in preparation for practice, qualifying and the race itself."

Unchanged Tyre Allocation and Even Greater Visibility

For the 2026 edition of the 24 Hours of Le Mans, Michelin will provide a total of **3,600 tyres** for the 18 Hypercars entered in the race. Initially, a deliberately limited quantity will be delivered for the Official Test Day. Michelin Motorsport teams will then replenish stocks according to actual tyre usage, thereby avoiding the transportation of unnecessary tyres.

This optimised inventory management approach is fully aligned with Michelin Motorsport's environmental responsibility strategy. As logistics operations account for a significant share of motorsport's carbon footprint, this method helps eliminate several truck journeys between Clermont-Ferrand and Le Mans, generating measurable benefits in terms of CO_2 emissions, transport efficiency and road safety.

In the same spirit, tyres used during the Official Test Day will primarily be tyres that have previously been used only during Hyperpole sessions at earlier events. Michelin is committed to maximising the mileage potential of its tyres, including in competition, before integrating them into recovery and recycling channels.

Each Hypercar will receive an allocation of **24 tyres for practice and qualifying**, plus **56 tyres for the race**, across all specifications combined.

Cars qualifying for Hyperpole will be granted an additional allocation of 12 tyres dedicated to that session. These tyres will subsequently be removed from the race allocation and made available again to teams during future private testing sessions.

All Hypercars competing in the 24 Hours of Le Mans use Michelin tyres sized 29/71-18 at the front and 34/71-18 at the rear. The wider rear tyre provides a larger contact patch to meet the specific demands placed on the rear axle.

Colour Coding to Understand Tyre Strategy

In agreement with its partners, Michelin Motorsport has made tyre strategies visible to everyone since 2024 through the introduction of colour-coded tyre sidewalls.

The colours were selected according to each tyre's operating temperature window rather than compound hardness, unlike the system used, for example, in Formula 1.

On the cars, both during pit stops and out on track (which features 38 corners over 13.626 km at Le Mans), spectators and competitors alike will be able to identify up to four different tyre specifications through the colours displayed on the sidewalls:

- **Soft**: White sidewall, symbolising cool conditions and the softest compound
- **Medium**: Yellow sidewall, representing a broad operating temperature range
- **Hard**: Red sidewall, associated with very hot track conditions
- **Wet**: Blue sidewall, the universal colour code for wet conditions

"*We chose colour codes based on the tyres' operating windows according to track temperature*," explains **Pierre Alves**. "*A Soft tyre is not necessarily faster than a Medium tyre if it is operating outside its optimum temperature range. The colour displayed on the sidewall therefore becomes an essential piece of information for sharing and understanding race strategies, even though our new range offers greater versatility. Associating white with cold conditions, red with heat and yellow with intermediate conditions was therefore the natural choice*."

In endurance racing, it is important to remember that manufacturing a single competition tyre requires approximately one hour, with more than half of the process carried out by hand. It is a large-scale craft-based approach combining precision, consistency and attention to detail at every stage… including the colour applied to the tyre sidewall.

Michelin's Partners for the 2026 24 Hours of Le Mans

As the world's leading tyre manufacturer, Michelin has supplied its pioneering products to the FIA World Endurance Championship's top-tier competitors since the series was established in 2012. Today, Michelin is the exclusive tyre supplier to the premier Hypercar category, a position that will continue through at least 2029.

The close collaboration between teams and the technological partnerships forged through motorsport directly benefit the work Michelin carries out with its original equipment manufacturer partners. Today, Michelin's unique expertise in digital simulation lies at the heart of this approach, enabling tyres to be integrated into vehicle development from the very earliest design stages. This methodology provides a highly effective way of accelerating the transfer of innovations developed for competition to road-going vehicles.

This season, Michelin equips 17 cars competing in the FIA World Endurance Championship. For the 2026 24 Hours of Le Mans, however, the French manufacturer will supply tyres to 18 Hypercars, with Cadillac entering a third car for the twice-around-the-clock endurance classic.

- AF CORSE: 1 × Ferrari 499P
- ALPINE ENDURANCE TEAM: 2 × Alpine A424
- ASTON MARTIN THOR TEAM: 2 × Aston Martin Valkyrie
- BMW M TEAM WRT: 2 × BMW M Hybrid V8
- CADILLAC HERTZ JOTA TEAM: 2 × Cadillac V-Series.R
- CADILLAC WAYNE TAYLOR RACING: 1 × Cadillac V-Series.R
- FERRARI AF CORSE: 2 × Ferrari 499P
- GENESIS MAGMA RACING: 2 × Genesis GMR-001
- PEUGEOT TOTALENERGIES: 2 × Peugeot 9X8
- TOYOTA GAZOO RACING: 2 × Toyota GR010 Hybrid

Michelin at the 2026 24 Hours of Le Mans: Key Figures

For the 2026 24 Hours of Le Mans, Michelin will transport approximately **3,600 tyres** from Clermont-Ferrand to equip every car in the Hypercar category. These tyres will be managed from an **850-square-metre workshop** located at the heart of the circuit.

In total, nearly **100 Michelin personnel** will be mobilised from the beginning of the Official Test Day through to the end of the race. This team includes **44 tyre fitters** working around the clock in a three-shift rotation throughout the event, **12 Team Technical Advisors** embedded within partner teams, **16 development and performance analyst engineers**, as well as specialists in chemistry, data analysis and tyre diagnostics.

Two tyre forensics experts will also analyse selected tyres returned from the track. Their role will be to carefully section and examine the tyres in order to study their internal structure and gain a deeper understanding of their behaviour after being subjected to extreme operating conditions.

APPENDIX 1

Learn More About the New Endurance Range and the Secrets Behind Its Development and Components

The design of this new generation of tyres is based on an innovative methodology combining advanced digital simulation, engineering expertise and real-world validation.

Using its proprietary simulation tools, Michelin was able to model the dynamic and thermal behaviour of the new compounds with a very high degree of accuracy. The most promising combinations were first assessed by professional drivers on simulators before being physically produced and tested on track.

In May 2025, several partner teams took part in a testing programme at Circuit Paul Ricard in Le Castellet, focusing in particular on the development of the new Medium compound. Feedback confirmed significant progress in grip, performance consistency and warm-up characteristics.

A final validation phase took place in June 2025 at Watkins Glen, in the United States, before large-scale production was launched at Michelin’s Cataroux facility in Clermont-Ferrand.

Each year, Michelin Motorsport produces approximately 30,000 endurance racing tyres for the FIA WEC and IMSA championships.

What Sustainable Materials Are Driving Enhanced Performance?

Inspired by Michelin’s demonstration tyre containing 71% sustainable materials, this new Hypercar range marks a further step forward in the integration of bio-based and recycled components.

The tyres notably incorporate:

- Natural rubber sourced from rubber trees;
- Recycled carbon black recovered from end-of-life tyres;
- Natural resins derived from orange and lemon peels (limonene);
- Bio-sourced silica produced from rice husks;
- Sunflower oil;
- Recycled steel produced through electric arc furnace technology or pyrolysis.

The tyre's internal structure also incorporates recycled PET, a material commonly used in the manufacture of water and beverage bottles. To develop this supply chain, Michelin has built an unprecedented ecosystem bringing together partners from industries far removed from the tyre sector.

"Race to Vision": A Meaningful Visual Signature

To make this technological breakthrough visible, Michelin has introduced a distinctive temporary livery on its new Endurance range called "Race to Vision".

This velvet-effect finish is directly inspired by the MICHELIN Vision concept unveiled in 2017, which embodies the Group's ambition to develop, by 2050, an airless, connected, rechargeable and fully sustainable tyre.

This visual identity will be reserved exclusively for tyres incorporating at least 50% renewable and recycled materials. It provides a tangible and highly visible representation of Michelin's progress in responsible innovation, while illustrating the biomimetic approach that inspires the development of tomorrow's tyre.

A Comprehensive Circularity Strategy

The sustainable materials used in these tyres are divided between renewable resources and recycled materials. Every new material introduced is subjected to a comprehensive Life Cycle Assessment (LCA) to ensure an overall environmental benefit.

Across the Michelin Group, each additional percentage point of bio-based or recycled materials represents approximately 30,000 tonnes of sourcing. Michelin prioritises full physical traceability of all materials used, without relying on offset mechanisms or environmental credit systems.

This commitment ensures that the progress achieved directly benefits both Michelin's motorsport partners and everyday motorists who drive on Michelin tyres.

All tyres used in the FIA WEC are collected after use and directed to dedicated recycling channels capable of recovering high-quality raw materials. These materials can then be used in the manufacture of new products, including future tyres.

Since 2025, Michelin and its partners have employed an innovative pyrolysis process. This technology makes it possible to recover regenerated carbon black, oils, steel and gas that can be reintroduced into new production cycles.

This virtuous circular loop helps reduce dependence on fossil resources while lowering CO_2 emissions compared with traditional energy-recovery solutions.

Vision 2050: The Ambition of 100% Sustainable Tyres

This new generation of tyres represents a major milestone in Michelin's environmental roadmap. Through its Michelin In Motion strategy, the Group aims to incorporate 100% renewable and recycled materials into its tyres by 2050, without compromising safety, performance or durability.

To achieve this objective, Michelin relies on four key pillars:

- Comprehensive life-cycle analysis of materials;
- Full physical traceability of sustainable components;
- Large-scale industrialisation of innovation;
- Collaboration with leading industrial partners and cutting-edge start-ups.

An ambitious vision that positions motorsport as an accelerator of progress, driving the development of increasingly sustainable mobility solutions.

APPENDIX 2

Michelin's History in the Sarthe Region

1906 – The Detachable Rim: An Innovation That Changed Racing

When the Sarthe region hosted the first Automobile Club de France Grand Prix in June 1906, the automobile was still in its infancy. On a 103-kilometre road circuit, competitors had to contend with heat, dust and poor road conditions. At the time, tyres were one of the main weaknesses of racing cars.

To address this challenge, Michelin introduced a game-changing innovation: the detachable rim. Thanks to a simple and rapid fastening system, a tyre could be replaced in just two minutes, compared with nearly ten minutes previously. This considerable time saving transformed pit-stop management and provided an unprecedented strategic advantage for teams equipped with the technology.

Its effectiveness was dramatically demonstrated in the race won by Ferenc Szisz driving a Renault. Despite making eighteen tyre changes during the event, the Hungarian driver secured victory thanks to the efficiency of this revolutionary solution.

1923 – The First 24 Hours of Le Mans and Confirmation of Michelin's Expertise

Following the First World War, the Automobile Club de l'Ouest created a new event designed to assess not only vehicle speed but also reliability and endurance.

On 26 May 1923, thirty-three crews lined up for the inaugural 24 Hours of Le Mans on a 17.262-kilometre circuit. In often challenging grip conditions, competitors had to demonstrate the robustness of their cars over a full day of racing.

Michelin equipped the two Chenard & Walcker cars that achieved a historic one-two finish with the Lagache–Léonard and Bachmann–Dauvergne crews.

These vehicles used "corded" tyres featuring carcasses made of parallel textile plies. Combined with the introduction of carbon black into rubber compounds, this technology significantly improved wear resistance and tyre durability.

The success at Le Mans directly contributed to the commercial launch of the Michelin "Confort" tyre, unveiled a few months later at the Paris Motor Show.

1951 – The Successful Racing Debut of the Radial Tyre

Patented in 1946 and commercialised from 1949, the MICHELIN X tyre featured a revolutionary design. Its radial carcass, reinforced by steel belts, delivered outstanding durability, safety, efficiency and comfort.

A major asset in motorsport, Michelin's radial tyre helped the Lancia B20 GT driven by Giovanni Bracco and Giovanni Lurani (Scuderia Ambrosiana) win the under-two-litre category at the 1951 24 Hours of Le Mans. It also marked one of the earliest links between racing and road cars, as Lancia subsequently chose to equip all of its new production models with MICHELIN X tyres.

1967 – The Debut of the Slick Tyre at Le Mans

As racing cars became increasingly powerful and faster, Michelin sought a solution that would maximise the amount of rubber in contact with the track to improve grip and traction in dry conditions.

The French manufacturer therefore developed a completely smooth tyre, with no tread pattern whatsoever, delivering unprecedented levels of grip and performance. The slick tyre was born, and its impact was immediate.

Mauro Bianchi and teammate Jean Vinatier, driving an Alpine A210, became the first competitors in their class to lap Le Mans in under four minutes. This innovation would go on to become a cornerstone of global motorsport.

1978 – Global Recognition for Michelin's Radial Tyre

Since its first appearance in 1951, the MICHELIN X had continued to evolve and gain market share as original equipment among leading automotive manufacturers worldwide.

In racing, Michelin's high-performance range proved perfectly suited to the Alpine A442 driven by Didier Pironi and Jean-Pierre Jaussaud, which claimed victory in the 1978 24 Hours of Le Mans. At the same time, Michelin was enjoying growing success in Formula 1 with Ferrari. The technological superiority of the radial tyre in motorsport would play a major role in its widespread adoption on production vehicles around the world.

Although Michelin participated intermittently in the 24 Hours of Le Mans over the following two decades, it still secured two victories with Peugeot. The French manufacturer made its official return to the Sarthe in 1998 and has won every edition of the race since then, achieving 28 consecutive victories.

2005 – Tyres for Audi Sport's Diesel Prototypes… and the 2011 Longevity Record

After returning to Le Mans in 1998, Michelin embarked on an extraordinary winning streak. In the early 2000s, automotive manufacturers were developing more efficient and powerful diesel engines based on direct injection and common-rail technology.

Audi Sport set itself an ambitious goal: to win the 24 Hours of Le Mans with a diesel-powered prototype. The Audi R10 was born, and the German manufacturer naturally turned to Michelin to develop tyres suited to its revolutionary new car.

Heavier, more powerful and producing unprecedented torque, these prototypes pushed Michelin's engineers to their limits. Throughout 2003 and 2004, all research and development departments were involved in the project, supported by advanced simulation tools.

In 2005, a new chapter in motorsport history was written as Audi and Michelin claimed victory together at Le Mans with a diesel prototype. A new technological pathway had been opened, one that Peugeot Sport would also embrace.

Remaining true to its philosophy of lasting performance, Michelin supported every evolution of the R10, which later became the R15 and then the R18, with tyres that delivered increasing performance and remarkable consistency throughout stints and race distances.

In 2011, Benoît Tréluyer, Marcel Fässler and André Lotterer won the 24 Hours of Le Mans once again in the No. 2 Audi R18 TDI, finishing just 14 seconds ahead of the No. 9 Peugeot 908 driven by Sébastien Bourdais, Pedro Lamy and Simon Pagenaud.

A key factor behind the victory was Benoît Tréluyer's ability to complete five consecutive stints on a single set of Michelin tyres, saving crucial time in the pits thanks to their exceptional consistency. It was an extraordinary achievement: five stints represented more than 750 kilometres—roughly the equivalent of two Formula 1 Grands Prix—completed on the same tyres at an average speed exceeding 240 km/h.

2014 – New Materials and a Smaller, Lighter LM P1 Tyre Range

Michelin has always placed great emphasis on high-tech materials. Its engineers continuously work to improve material science and develop new technological solutions.

By 2014, progress had become so significant that the Group had established a dedicated High-Tech Materials business line extending well beyond the tyre industry.

To accelerate and validate innovations in materials and structures, Michelin developed a new tyre range for the premier LM P1 category. Up to six centimetres narrower than their predecessors and 15% lighter, these tyres represented a revolution.

They were faster than the previous generation and capable of lasting at least four stints on hybrid prototypes producing up to 1,000 horsepower and generating three tonnes of aerodynamic downforce along the Hunaudières Straight.

2014 – The MICHELIN Hybrid Tyre at Le Mans, a Preview of the MICHELIN CrossClimate

During the 82nd edition of the 24 Hours of Le Mans, weather conditions were unsettled. Following a storm, the wet track began drying in places. It was still too early to switch to slick tyres, yet Toyota Racing cars returned to the track fitted with Michelin tyres featuring no tread pattern.

They immediately began setting competitive lap times, surprising observers with the performance of the new MICHELIN Hybrid tyre, often described as an "intermediate slick".

At the time, Michelin engineers were developing a new all-season road tyre, the MICHELIN CrossClimate, designed to perform effectively in both summer and winter conditions, including on snow.

Once again, motorsport served as an innovation accelerator. Michelin researchers used endurance racing to test new rubber compounds. The MICHELIN Hybrid tyre was revolutionary on the racetrack, just as the MICHELIN CrossClimate has become on the road. After more than 25 million tyres sold, the second-generation MICHELIN CrossClimate 2 has helped establish the all-season tyre market across Europe.

2021 – The First Tyre Range Designed Entirely in Simulation

In 2020, the Automobile Club de l'Ouest (ACO) and the International Motor Sports Association (IMSA) achieved a technological convergence that enabled manufacturers to compete in both the FIA World Endurance Championship and the IMSA WeatherTech SportsCar Championship.

The new top category became known as Hypercar. Simpler technologically and more cost-effective for manufacturers, Hypercars quickly attracted major automotive brands including Acura, BMW, Cadillac, Ferrari, Lamborghini, Peugeot and Porsche.

Already a technical partner of the American championship, Michelin was selected by the ACO and the FIA as the exclusive tyre supplier for the new FIA WEC Hypercar category. The challenge was clear: develop a single tyre range capable of serving all Hypercars in both championships.

Faced with differing circuit characteristics, extremely high vehicle performance, tight development deadlines and the constraints of a global health crisis, Michelin turned to advanced digital technologies. Leveraging its proprietary Tame Tire thermodynamic virtual tyre model, Michelin became the first manufacturer to develop an entire racing tyre range using simulation alone.

The resulting tyre range proved the validity of a fully digital development process, with all subsequent testing confirming the accuracy of Michelin's work.

2026 – A New MICHELIN Pilot Sport Endurance Range Featuring More Than 50% Renewable and Recycled Materials

In 2026, Michelin reached a major milestone in its sustainable innovation strategy with the introduction of a new generation of MICHELIN Pilot Sport Endurance tyres for the Hypercar category in both the IMSA WeatherTech SportsCar Championship and FIA WEC.

Developed to meet the extreme demands of top-level endurance racing while reducing environmental impact, these tyres incorporate 50% renewable and recycled materials.

This achievement marks an important step in Michelin's roadmap towards producing fully sustainable tyres by 2050. It demonstrates that the proportion of renewable and recycled materials can be significantly increased without compromising the performance, consistency and endurance required by manufacturers competing at the highest level of endurance racing.

The 2026 MICHELIN Pilot Sport Endurance range incorporates a wide variety of low-impact materials, including natural rubber, recycled carbon black recovered from end-of-life tyres, bio-sourced silica derived from rice husks, natural resins produced from citrus-based limonene, sunflower oil and recycled steel. All of these materials are subject to rigorous physical traceability and are selected according to both their technical and environmental performance.

Their development relied on Michelin's most advanced digital simulation technologies, combined with simulator testing and on-track validation. This approach optimises performance from the earliest design stages while reducing the number of physical prototypes required.

Beyond the tyre itself, this new generation is part of a broader circular economy strategy. FIA WEC tyres are now collected after use and recycled through pyrolysis, enabling the recovery of high-quality raw materials that can be reused in new industrial applications, including the manufacture of future Michelin tyres.

Finally, the new MICHELIN Pilot Sport Endurance slick tyres feature a distinctive temporary tread design known as "Race to Vision". Created using Michelin's exclusive velvet-effect technology, this marking makes innovation visible while drawing inspiration from the MICHELIN Vision concept, which previews the tyres of the future.

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 122,600 people.

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