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Lone Star Le Mans

Michelin Pilot Sport Endurance range takes on the season's most "energy-intensive" circuit

- The fifth round of the FIA World Endurance Championship will take place at Circuit of The Americas in Austin, Texas, from September 4-6, 2026.
- Despite having the lowest average speed of the season, the Texan circuit generates the highest energy levels in the tires, due to the combined effects of acceleration, braking and high-speed corners.
- Michelin will offer Medium and Hard compounds for this round, providing its partners with the performance, stability and consistency required to meet the demands of the circuit and the expected temperatures. A dedicated range will also be available in the event of rain.

Following the Rolex 6 Hours of São Paulo, the FIA World Endurance Championship remains on the other side of the Atlantic for the fifth round of its 2026 season. From September 4-6, the Hypercars will return to Circuit of The Americas for the six-hour Lone Star Le Mans, which gets underway at 1:00 p.m. local time on Sunday.

Opened in 2012, the Austin circuit measures 5.513 km (3.425 miles) and features 20 corners – 11 left-handers and nine right-handers. Although it runs counterclockwise, the loads are distributed relatively evenly across all four tires. Its undulating profile, frequent changes of pace and combination of different asphalt surfaces make it a particularly comprehensive challenge for both the teams and Michelin Motorsport.

A lap of contrasting demands

Austin has the lowest average speed of the season, yet paradoxically places the highest energy demands on the tires. This unique characteristic results from the combination of hard acceleration and braking phases with several very fast corners, where lateral loads become significant. Adding to the challenge are the potentially large variations in track temperature at different times of the day.

The first sector combines the spectacular uphill approach to Turn 1 with the fast sequence of Turns 2 through 6. After a straighter section, the cars reach Turn 12, one of the most demanding braking zones on the calendar, before tackling a succession of slower corners between Turns 11 and 15. The final sector changes character again, with the long, fast Turns 16 and 17, followed eventually by the slower Turn 20.

Over the course of a single lap, the tires must therefore operate under very different conditions: delivering traction at low speeds, withstanding longitudinal forces under braking and coping with high lateral loads through the faster sections. Managing tire temperature and grip levels in the third sector will be crucial to maintaining consistent performance throughout a double stint.

Pierre Alves, Michelin Motorsport Endurance Program Manager: *"Circuit of The Americas is quite a paradoxical track, with characteristics that require our tires to cope with very different demands over the course of a single lap. Overall, however, the loads are relatively well balanced, and one side of the car will not be significantly more stressed than the other, as can be the case at certain other circuits where teams sometimes replace only two of the four tires, either on the left or the right. Here, Sector 3 will be the most challenging, but this is also where our tires will make the difference thanks to their long-lasting consistency."*

"After São Paulo, where the Medium compound confirmed its full potential despite higher-than-expected track temperatures, it will be the turn of our Hard compound to demonstrate what it can deliver as temperatures rise."

"We also haven't forgotten that heavy rain made conditions particularly challenging at Austin in 2025, especially as the Texan circuit's asphalt offers relatively poor drainage. Our perfectly balanced wet-weather range will therefore also be available to our partners. As always, our tire package has been designed to cover every eventuality, and we are now looking forward to seeing our partners take to the track."

A new, more sustainable generation of tires

Introduced this season, the new generation of MICHELIN Pilot Sport Endurance tires fitted to all cars in the Hypercar class is made with 50% renewable and recycled materials. This figure illustrates Michelin's ability to combine long-lasting performance, consistency over extended stints and reduced use of fossil-based or virgin raw materials in one of the most demanding environments in motorsport.

For the 2026 Lone Star Le Mans, Hypercar competitors will have access to MICHELIN Pilot Sport Endurance tires in two different slick compounds:

- **Medium:** a highly versatile compound for dry conditions.
- **Hard:** a specific compound designed for the highest track temperatures, particularly those expected around the middle of the day.

In wet conditions, Michelin's partners will be able to rely on dedicated tires featuring a tread pattern specifically designed for rain. They provide optimum grip regardless of rainfall intensity, including when the racing line begins to dry. Their performance level enables competitive lap times in changing conditions while ensuring a smooth transition to slick tires.

For the entire race weekend, each Michelin partner will have an allocation of 30 tires: 12 for free practice and 18 for qualifying and the race. The 10 cars that qualify for Hyperpole will receive four additional tires, which will subsequently be collected by Michelin for reuse during private testing.

2026 Lone Star Le Mans schedule

- Friday, September 4: Free Practice 1 at 11:30 a.m.; Free Practice 2 at 4:00 p.m.
- Saturday, September 5: Free Practice 3 at 11:00 a.m.; Hypercar qualifying at 3:40 p.m.; Hypercar Hyperpole at 4:00 p.m.
- Sunday, September 6: Lone Star Le Mans starts at 1:00 p.m. for six hours of racing.

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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