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6 Hours of Fuji

Performance, consistency and multiple strategies for MICHELIN Pilot Sport Endurance tires at the 6 Hours of Fuji

- Held in cool and changing conditions, the 6 Hours of Fuji gave Michelin's partners the opportunity to explore a wide range of tire strategies, including different combinations of Soft and Medium tires at the start of the race.
- The MICHELIN Pilot Sport Endurance Soft gradually emerged as the preferred choice, enabling the majority of Hypercars to double-stint their tires. Some completed more than 80 laps – nearly 400 km – without changing their right-rear tire.
- Driving the No. 36 Alpine A424, Victor Martins set a new Hypercar race lap record at Fuji with a time of 1m30.486s, improving on the previous benchmark established in 2025.

The 6 Hours of Fuji, the sixth round of the 2026 FIA World Endurance Championship, concluded after a particularly eventful race marked by cool temperatures, numerous neutralizations and changing track conditions. In this demanding environment, the new 2026 MICHELIN Pilot Sport Endurance tires provided Michelin's manufacturer partners with a broad range of strategic options.

Following the rain that led to the cancellation of qualifying on Saturday, the 17 Hypercars took the start on Sunday morning on a track that was still damp and drying in places. Temperatures were significantly lower than those encountered during Friday's practice sessions, with just 18°C ambient and 21°C track temperature at the start.

These conditions, which the teams had not previously encountered during the weekend, prompted them to explore very different tire strategies from the opening laps.

A wide variety of strategies from the start

With the track still damp and temperatures particularly low, the manufacturers made full use of the versatility of the 2026 MICHELIN Pilot Sport Endurance range.

The majority of the field opted for the Soft specification, while Peugeot Sport, AF Corse and the No. 17 Genesis GMR-001 started the race on Mediums. Ferrari, Toyota and the No. 19 Genesis, meanwhile, explored mixed configurations combining the two specifications.

This variety allowed the teams to tailor their strategies both to the characteristics of their respective Hypercars and to the rapidly evolving track conditions.

As the laps went by and the circuit continued to dry, the MICHELIN Pilot Sport Endurance Soft gradually emerged as the preferred option. Its ability to reach its optimal operating window quickly – one of the key development priorities of the new 2026 range – proved particularly well suited to the low temperatures encountered at Fuji.

Its consistent performance also enabled the majority of manufacturers to double-stint their tires, opening up additional strategic possibilities when managing pit stops.

Nearly 400 km on the same tire

At the halfway point, with the two Alpine A424s leading ahead of the Aston Martin Valkyries, the majority of the field continued to double-stint the MICHELIN Pilot Sport Endurance Soft. Peugeot was the only manufacturer still running the Medium specification at that stage.

Tire longevity was another notable feature of the race. Almost every team had at least one car that kept its right-rear tire for more than 80 laps, representing a distance of nearly 400 km.

This ability to extend tire stints played a direct role in the strategies adopted by the manufacturers. In a race punctuated by several Virtual Safety Car and Safety Car periods, every opportunity to delay a stop or retain a set of tires had the potential to reshape the running order.

With less than two hours remaining, the two Alpine A424s took advantage of a neutralization to make their final stops and rejoin on Soft tires, with the No. 009 Aston Martin Valkyrie adopting the same strategy.

A lengthy Safety Car period during the final hour reshuffled the order once again. Taking advantage, in particular, of the ability to double-stint its tires, the No. 8 Toyota GR010 Hybrid moved into the lead ahead of the No. 15 BMW M Hybrid V8 and the two Alpines. Despite a late charge from the No. 36 Alpine A424, Toyota held on to win the 2026 6 Hours of Fuji.

A new race lap record at Fuji

The performance of the new MICHELIN Pilot Sport Endurance tires was also reflected on the timing screens.

With 1 hour and 20 minutes remaining, on lap 158, Victor Martins recorded a 1m30.486s lap in the No. 36 Alpine A424, setting a new Hypercar race lap record at Fuji Speedway.

The French driver improved the previous benchmark by 0.021 seconds, beating the 1m30.507s lap set by Will Stevens in the No. 12 Cadillac V-Series.R in 2025.

Pierre Alves, Michelin Endurance Program Manager

"The significantly lower temperatures compared with those encountered during practice led the teams to explore a wide range of strategies at the start of the race, using Softs, Mediums and different combinations of the two specifications.

In these cool conditions, the Soft proved particularly effective, with excellent warm-up and, above all, impressive consistency. The majority of the cars were able to double-stint their tires, while some kept their right-rear tire for more than 80 laps, or nearly 400 km.

The new race lap record set by Victor Martins in 1m30.486s in challenging track conditions also illustrates the performance level of our new range. This weekend demonstrated its ability to combine warm-up, performance and consistency in particularly changeable conditions.

Finally, I would like to congratulate Toyota Racing on its victory at Fuji. The team made full use of the longevity of the MICHELIN Pilot Sport Endurance Soft tires, and the decision to keep them on the car during the final pit stop proved decisive in securing the win."

About Michelin

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