

Motegi (Japan), October 4, 2026

Motul Grand Prix of Japan
Performance and adaptability from Michelin on Motegi's new asphalt

- The new asphalt at Mobility Resort Motegi delivered a very high level of grip, allowing the MotoGP™ riders to improve several circuit benchmarks. Jorge Martin (Aprilia Racing) set a new all-time lap record of 1'42.371, while Enea Bastianini (Red Bull KTM Tech3) established a new race lap record of 1'43.041.
- The high temperatures reached by the rear tyres during a Tissot Sprint completed nine seconds faster than in 2025 led Michelin to withdraw the Soft from the allocation for the Grand Prix and recommend the Hard with its reinforced casing.
- Tested on Sunday morning during a Warm Up session exceptionally extended to 20 minutes, the rear Michelin Power Slick Hard was chosen by every rider for the Grand Prix. It enabled them to maintain a very high pace right through to the closing laps of the race.

The Motul Grand Prix of Japan, the 16th round of the 2026 FIM MotoGP™ World Championship, provided Michelin Motorsport with a particularly instructive weekend. Completely resurfaced since the previous edition, Mobility Resort Motegi represented an unknown quantity before the first laps were completed. Its new surface ultimately proved to be very high-performing, but also particularly demanding on the tyres.

On Friday, the track still showed some traces of oil resulting from the resurfacing work. Conditions improved rapidly as the bikes completed more laps, cleaning the racing line and laying down rubber. Grip levels increased throughout the day, and the rear Michelin Power Slick Soft and Medium immediately delivered strong performance in terms of both grip and consistency.

The rear Soft proved particularly effective during the time attacks, allowing riders to string together several fast laps. This trend continued during qualifying on Saturday morning. With the track at 28°C, the top five riders in Q2 were separated by just 175 thousandths of a second, while eight riders lapped below the previous circuit benchmark. Jorge Martin (Aprilia Racing) ultimately secured pole position with a new all-time lap record at Mobility Resort Motegi of 1'42.371.

A particularly demanding Tissot Sprint

Conditions changed significantly on Saturday afternoon. With an ambient temperature of 23°C and the track at 37°C, every rider selected the Michelin Power Slick Medium front. At the rear, the vast majority of the field opted for the Soft, while some riders chose the Medium.

The high grip level offered by the new asphalt, combined with the particularly fast pace of the Tissot Sprint, placed considerable demands on the rear tyres. The 12-lap race was completed nine seconds faster than in 2025, representing an improvement of almost seven tenths of a second per lap.

Under these conditions, temperatures measured in the rear tyres reached particularly high levels, both at the surface and within the tyre structure. Their behaviour also varied significantly from one bike to another depending on riding style, bike set-up, the amount of wheelspin and, more generally, the energy transmitted to the rear tyre.

Despite these demands, the tyres maintained a high level of performance. Marc Marquez (Ducati Lenovo Team) won the Tissot Sprint ahead of Diogo Moreira (Pro Honda LCR) and Jorge Martin. Ai Ogura (SuperFile Trackhouse MotoGP Team) also set a new top-speed benchmark at Motegi of 324.3 km/h, 3 km/h faster than the previous record.

Analysis of the tyres following the Tissot Sprint nevertheless led Michelin Motorsport to adapt its allocation for the main race. The rear Soft was withdrawn, while the Medium remained available. Given the demands observed on Saturday, Michelin recommended the rear Hard with its reinforced casing, designed to provide additional support and allow riders to maintain a high pace over the 24 laps of the Grand Prix.

The rear Hard adopted by the entire field

To allow the riders to evaluate this specification in suitable conditions before the race, Sunday morning's Warm Up was exceptionally extended from 10 to 20 minutes. This gave the teams the opportunity to compare the rear Medium and Hard and adjust their bike set-ups accordingly.

Under overcast skies, with the track temperature close to 30°C, the Hard immediately proved competitive. The fastest times of the session were set on this specification, with Marc Marquez notably recording a 1'42.957. Following the Warm Up, every rider on the grid selected the rear Michelin Power Slick Hard for the Grand Prix, paired with the Medium front.

In front of nearly 122,000 spectators, the race confirmed the potential of this combination. Jorge Martin took the lead at the start ahead of Marc Marquez and Marco Bezzecchi (Aprilia Racing). The three riders quickly pulled clear, with Martin and Marquez setting a particularly fast pace.

On lap 10, Marc Marquez passed Jorge Martin and moved into the lead. Behind them, Marco Bezzecchi had to fend off a late charge from Enea Bastianini. The latter produced a succession of fast laps and, on lap 23, set a new race lap record of 1'43.041, demonstrating the level of performance still available from the rear Hard as the race approached its conclusion.

Marc Marquez ultimately took victory ahead of Jorge Martin and Marco Bezzecchi, with Enea Bastianini finishing fourth.

Piero Taramasso, Michelin Motorsport Two-Wheel Manager:

"This was a particularly interesting weekend for us because we arrived at Motegi without any real data on the new asphalt. From Friday onwards, we saw that the track was evolving very quickly. Performance levels were immediately very high, with eight riders lapping below the previous record during qualifying and Jorge Martin setting a new all-time lap record.

The Tissot Sprint pushed the rear Michelin Power Slick Soft tyres to their limits. The new surface offered a great deal of grip, the track temperature was close to 40°C and the pace was exceptional, with the 12 laps completed nine seconds faster than last year. This combination generated a huge amount of energy and very high temperatures in the rear tyres.

After analysing all the data, we decided to withdraw the rear Soft for the Grand Prix and recommend the Hard with its reinforced casing. The outcome was very positive, with the entire field ultimately choosing the rear Hard. The riders were able to maintain a very high pace throughout the 24 laps, and Enea Bastianini even set a new race lap record on lap 23. It is an excellent illustration of our ability to quickly analyse a new situation and, working together with the teams, provide the most appropriate solution."

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