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Qatar Airways Grand Prix of Qatar
Michelin Power Slick Tires Take On the Challenges of a Night Race in Qatar

- Originally scheduled for April, the Qatar Airways Grand Prix of Qatar will take place November 6–8 at Lusail International Circuit. Postponed due to the geopolitical situation in the Middle East, the event will now serve as the 20th round of the 2026 FIM MotoGP™ World Championship.
- The move from spring to fall is expected to bring more moderate temperatures than in 2025, without reducing the challenges posed to tires by the circuit's particularly abrasive asphalt, the presence of sand, and the changing grip levels associated with night racing.
- Drawing on its extensive experience at Lusail, where four new records were set in 2025, Michelin heads into the event with a Michelin Power Slick tire allocation designed to deliver the best possible balance of grip, stability, and consistent performance.

The 2026 FIM MotoGP™ World Championship continues its journey around the globe, stopping in Qatar for the 20th round of the season. Originally scheduled for April 10–12, the Qatar Airways Grand Prix of Qatar has been rescheduled for November 6–8 due to the geopolitical situation in the Middle East. The decision, made in consultation with the Fédération Internationale de Motocyclisme (FIM), the championship promoter, and local authorities, has also resulted in the final two rounds of the 2026 championship, in Portugal and Spain, being pushed back to the last two weekends of November.

This calendar change significantly alters the conditions expected for the event. Held in April last year, the Grand Prix was marked by particularly high track temperatures, reaching 54–56°C during daytime sessions. In November, weather conditions should be milder, with ambient temperatures generally ranging from 22°C to 30°C. However, Michelin's teams will still have to contend with temperature differences between daytime and nighttime sessions, as well as humidity levels that may increase as the evening progresses.

Located just a few kilometers from Doha, Lusail International Circuit has hosted MotoGP since 2004. It also made history in 2008 by staging the sport's first-ever night Grand Prix. Made possible by an extensive floodlighting system, night racing helps avoid the extreme daytime heat while providing more comfortable conditions for riders and spectators alike.

For tires, however, this unique feature presents an additional challenge. Unlike most circuits, where track temperatures generally rise as a race progresses, nighttime events at Lusail take place on asphalt that tends to cool down minute by minute. Falling temperatures, combined with humidity and windblown sand deposits, can significantly affect grip levels.

Upgraded and completely resurfaced in 2023, Lusail remains one of the most demanding circuits on the calendar for tires. Its fast layout, featuring the longest straight of the season (1,068 meters), 10 right-hand turns, and six left-hand turns, places considerable stress on the tires. The asphalt's macrotexture provides good grip but also contributes to tire wear, particularly with softer compounds. Sand is another important factor, as it can cause wheelspin and accelerate tire degradation.

Thanks to the extensive data collected since the circuit was resurfaced, Michelin now has an in-depth understanding of Lusail's characteristics. Combined with the French tire manufacturer's simulation tools, this information makes it possible to anticipate thermal and mechanical stresses and select the tire specifications best suited to the expected conditions.

Piero Taramasso, Michelin Motorsport Two-Wheel Competition Manager:
"Qatar is always a special event because we have to deal with several factors that directly influence tire behavior. This year, the change of date should mean lower temperatures than those we experienced in April 2025, but the circuit remains very demanding. As the afternoon turns into evening, track temperatures will gradually drop, and dew may begin to form. We now know this circuit extremely well and have plenty of data to help us prepare our tire allocation, but these conditions can affect how the compounds perform.

Last year, the Medium tires, both front and rear, demonstrated excellent versatility and helped set several new records. Our objective remains the same this year: to provide tires capable of delivering the highest levels of performance, whatever the conditions."

For the 2026 Qatar Airways Grand Prix of Qatar, Michelin will offer its partners a Michelin Power Slick allocation featuring two front tire specifications (Soft and Medium), identical to those used in 2025. Both feature a symmetrical construction, suited to the demands placed on the front tire by this particularly challenging circuit. The Hard specification, which was available last year but went unused, has not been included in this year's allocation.

At the rear, the allocation also includes two compounds (Soft and Medium), unchanged from 2025. However, given the circuit layout, both feature an asymmetrical tread design, with a reinforced right-hand side.

In the event of rain, Michelin will make its Michelin Power Rain range available in Soft and Medium specifications for both the front and rear.

The 2025 edition confirmed the effectiveness of Michelin's technical choices. Despite track temperatures exceeding 55°C during some sessions (although they were closer to 35°C during the nighttime Grand Prix), the Michelin Power Slick Medium tires demonstrated remarkable versatility. This specification was selected by every rider for both the front and rear in the Grand Prix, having already established itself as the preferred choice during the Tissot Sprint.

Records to Beat

The 2025 event saw four records broken, all by Marc Márquez (Ducati Lenovo Team): the all-time circuit lap record of 1'50.499, the fastest race lap of 1'52.561, the Tissot Sprint race duration record of 20'38.304, and the Grand Prix race duration record of 41'29.186. The latter was more than 14 seconds faster than the previous benchmark.

Weekend Schedule

At Lusail, riders will take to the track on Friday for Free Practice 1 (3:45–4:30 PM), followed by Practice (8:00–9:00 PM), which will determine the ten riders who qualify directly for Q2.

Saturday will feature Free Practice 2 and the two qualifying sessions (all taking place between 3:40 and 4:20 PM), followed by the 11-lap Tissot Sprint at 8:00 PM.

On Sunday, riders will line up for the Qatar Airways Grand Prix of Qatar, scheduled for 22 laps, starting at 8:00 PM.

About Michelin

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