

2017 FIA World Endurance Championship (WEC)  
Round 7: 6 Hours of Fuji

## ***Michelin tyres poised for strategic role at Fuji Speedway***

Round 7 of the 2017 FIA World Endurance Championship at Fuji Speedway, Japan, is likely to play a key part in the outcome of the year's title battles.

An atypical venue inaugurated in 1965 and located close to the famous mountain of the same name, the 4.563km circuit features the season's second-longest straight (1.5km) after the Mulsanne Straight at Le Mans. Car set-up for the track is always a challenge for the teams who must also take into account the particularly twisty infield section, notably Turns 3 and 8 and the run from Turn 10 to Turn 16. There is a temptation to favour a low-downforce configuration to permit high top speeds down the straight, but the twistier section calls for higher aerodynamic loads in order to generate grip.

At the same time, Fuji Speedway's geographical location between the sea and Mount Fuji can produce some pretty fickle weather to complicate matters further still. Forecasters are predicting cloud cover and showers for this year's 6 Hours of Fuji, with air temperatures of around 17°C and track temperatures of up to just 22°C, even if the sun makes an appearance.

"This race comes after the WEC's trip to Texas where our partners used our new 'HARD Plus' slicks on several occasions. The conditions promise to be much cooler in Japan," notes **Jérôme Mondain**, the manager of Michelin's endurance racing programmes. "The weather experts are saying there could be rain for qualifying and the race, and this might result in a variety of tyre strategies, with different cars potentially running on wet tyres, full wets or hybrid slicks depending on team preference.

"Even if the weather is fine, the advice of our technicians will be indispensable since the teams have a tendency to favour low-downforce set-ups at Fuji to permit higher speeds down the long straight. When they do this, they count enormously on the mechanical grip delivered by their tyres through the twistier portions. Whichever option they go for, tyres promise to play a key role in their respective game plans."

Michelin's LM P1 partner teams will be able to choose either MEDIUM- or HARD-compound tyres for the 2017 6 Hours of Fuji, while the choice for the French firm's LM GTE runners will be between SOFT or MEDIUM rubber. Wets and full wets will also be available, as well as the versatile MICHELIN Hybrid slick which the LM P1 teams will be able to fit to cover drying conditions.

