

MICHELIN RAIN TYRES POWER DOVIZIOSO TO VICTORY AT A SOAKED MOTEGI

MICHELIN Power Rain tyres enabled Andrea Dovizioso (Ducati Team) and Marc Marquez (Repsol Honda Team) to provide a stunning climax to today's Motul Grand Prix of Japan at Motegi with the Italian clinching victory on the last-lap after an exciting MotoGP™ race.

Unprecedented weather at Motegi this weekend had seen every session declared wet - the first time in the MotoGP era - and today was no exception as the skies opened and a torrential downpour covered the 4,801m Japanese circuit. With rain in the air, the riders lined up on the grid, Johann Zarco (Monster Yamaha Tech3) took pole position after setting the best time in yesterday's qualifying. As the lights changed Marquez was ahead in the first corner, but was soon passed by Jorge Lorenzo (Ducati Team). The Spaniard held this position until lap-two, before Danilo Petrucci (OCTO Pramac Racing) took his place at the head of the field. Petrucci began stretching his lead at the front, as the remainder of the pack got involved in their own battles behind him.

As the race progressed, Marquez closed on the leader and overtook him on lap-13, before Dovizioso snatched the lead from the reigning World Champion on the 19th of 24 circulations, with what was to be the first of many changes of leadership between the pair as the race drew to a close. Dovizioso's surge to the front resulted in him setting the fastest time of the day, with a lap-time that was only just over 10% away from the dry lap-record, again highlighting the incredible grip the MICHELIN Power Rain tyres give the riders. The top-two in the championship then went head-to-head over the remainder of the race, before heading into the last-lap with Marquez out in front. With rain still falling, Dovizioso lined up a successful pass at the 90° corner, only to see Marquez come past him straight away, before the Ducati-rider again got the best of the Honda-mounted man to take victory at the end of a scintillating race. Marquez crossed the line in second and saw his title-lead cut to just 11-points, with three races remaining. Petrucci finished third and had the distinction of taking the First Independent Rider honours.

With so many wet sessions Michelin had been able to give a full evaluation to its Power Rain tyres and the incredible amount of grip that the French rubber produced on the Motegi track led to impressive lap-times in the wet, but also resulted in very high stress levels on the front tyres from the hard-braking sections. The riders had the opportunity to select from the extra soft and soft versions, which again saw a split in choice, with two of the podium finishers choosing the soft, whilst the other opted for the extra soft and the medium option front tyre gave good performance to the whole field.

Today's event was watched at trackside by 52,439 fans that braved the awful weather and they were treated to battles throughout the race that almost matched the excitement at the front. Andrea Iannone (Team SUZUKI ECSTAR) took fourth, just ahead of team-mate Alex Rins (Team SUZUKI ECSTAR), both recording their best results of the season so far. Lorenzo was sixth, followed home by Aleix Espargaro (Aprilia Racing Team Gresini). Zarco took eighth and continues to lead both the Independent Team Rider and Rookie Championships. Maverick Viñales (Movistar Yamaha MotoGP) was ninth, with Loris Baz (Reale Avintia Racing) rounding out the top-ten.

Michelin and the MotoGP paddock now head to the southern hemisphere, where the French company become title sponsor for the 16th round of the season, as Phillip Island welcomes the championship for the Michelin® Australian Motorcycle Grand Prix on Sunday 22nd October.



Andrea Dovizioso - Ducati Team:

“Michelin’s medium front tyre worked very well, so that was good and the rear worked well up until the end and we did a fast race. The grip in the wet was really good all weekend and I am very happy to get this victory.”

Nicolas Goubert - Deputy Director, Technical Director and Supervisor of the MotoGP Programme:

“This has been a very demanding weekend and one that we did not really expect. To have two or three wet sessions is a lot, but for every session and then the race to be wet is unheard of. We had to work very hard all weekend with all the teams to get the best performance and having so much track-time with so many riders - and in those conditions - helped us to do one of the most comprehensive tests on the rain tyres we have ever been able to complete. The race produced some incredible battles and very fast lap-times, so the rain tyres certainly produced a lot of grip and confidence, which allowed the riders to push to the limits. To be so close to the dry lap-record in these conditions is evidence that again the tyres are giving the utmost performance in all conditions. We will work on the data we have learned this weekend and continue to improve. Now we head to one of the most challenging races of the year, as we go to Australia and our ‘own’ Grand Prix.”



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