



PRESS RELEASE

MOTORSPORT

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Michelin's new Hypercar tyres triumph at Le Mans

- 24 out of 24: Michelin's 24th Le Mans victory on the trot as the new Hypercar prototypes lock out the top five places
- Exceptional consistency: the Hypercar drivers complete up to three stints on the same set of Michelin tyres
- Michelin's first Le Mans success with tyres developed entirely virtually

The 2021 Le Mans 24 Hours saw Toyota Gazoo Racing's two prototypes take the chequered flag in first and second places. The victory went to Mike Conway/José-Maria López/Kamui Kobayashi's N°7 GR010-Hybrid which will go down in history as the first Hypercar to win the famous French race.

Second over the line was the N°8 sister car of Sébastien Buemi, Kazuki Nakajima and Brendon Hartley, while André Negrão/Nicolas Lapierre/Matthieu Vaxiviere (N°36 Alpine A480 Gibson) joined the Japanese squad's two trios for the podium celebrations. The two Glickenhaus 007 LMHs came fourth and fifth as Michelin monopolised the top five places.

"It was a superb result and we could hardly have been more delighted with the performance of our tyres this weekend," said **Pierre Alves**, manager of Michelin's endurance racing programme. "Thanks to the lessons learnt at the year's previous FIA World Endurance Championship rounds at Spa-Francorchamps [Belgium], Portimão [Portugal] and Monza [Italie], we had built up a good understanding of our Hypercar range ahead of the trip to Le Mans, but these new tyres had yet to lap at the season's longest circuit and race – the Le Mans 24 Hours – which is also where we see the highest average speeds. The constraints our tyres have to contend with at Le Mans are higher than anywhere else, so we are proud to have succeeded in helping our partner complete the distance at the top of the leaderboard."

Triple stints and potentially more with the new MICHELIN Pilot Sport

Certain Hypercar teams succeeded in triple-stinting on the same set of tyres which delivered consistent performance from the first kilometre to the last. "Had they had to, we believe our partners could have even run quadruple stints. That exceeded our expectations based on the simulation work we carried out prior to the race," noted **Pierre Alves** as Michelin's all-new Hypercar range lived up to the brand's Performance Made to Last pledge.



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Two different sets of tyre sizes for the Hypercar class

Due to their different weight-distribution characteristics, the Hypercars make different demands of their tyres compared with the former LMP1 prototypes, with loads on the rear wheels that have increased by as much as 50 percent. Michelin consequently had to develop an all-new range for endurance racing's latest headlining cars, using computer-aided design and simulators alone. The size developed for the Toyota Gazoo Racing and Alpine Elf Matmut cars is 31/71-18 on all four corners, while the Glickenhaus Racing machines run 29/71-18 and 34/71-18 tyres front and rear. These narrower front tyres will also feature on the upcoming LMDH cars.

"The work we accomplished in association with Glickenhaus at Le Mans with this unprecedented fitment will lay the foundations for the development of our upcoming LMDH range," pointed out **Pierre Alves**. "This weekend's result confirms that their design is perfectly suited and suggests that the virtual development process we employed was a success."

Ferrari on top with Michelin in LMGTE Pro and LMGTE Am

Michelin's partners Ferrari and AF Corse topped the order in both LMGTE classes. The Pro division was won by the N°51 Ferrari 488 GTE EVO of Alessandro Pier Guidi, James Calado and Côme Ledogar, ahead of the new N°63 Chevrolet Corvette C8.R which was making its Le Mans debut. Shared by Antonio Garcia, Jordan Taylor and Nicky Catsburg, the recently-design, mid-engined iconic American car provided a clear indication of its excellent performance potential and reliability. Third spot in LMGTE Pro went to the N°92 Porsche 911 RSR 19 of Kevin Estre, Neel Jani and Michael Christensen.

LMGTE Am honours went to the N°83 Ferrari 488 GTE EVO (François Perrodo, Nicklas Nielsen, Alessio Rovera) which was chased over the line by TF Sport's N°33 Aston Martin Vantage AMR (Ben Keating, Dylan Pereira, Felipe Fraga). The Iron Lynx-run N°80 Ferrari 488 GTE EVO (Matteo Cressoni, Rino Mastronardi, Callum Iloft) made it an all-Michelin top-three in this category, too.

Teamwork and a tyre range founded on temperature windows

Michelin achieved its aim of providing its partners with the right tyre at the right moment from the start to the finish of this year's Le Mans 24 Hours, despite some changeable weather conditions and cooler-than-expected temperatures which influenced race strategies in every class.

"For the start of the race, different teams opted for DRYING WET or FULL WET rain tyres as a function of their respective strategies," explained **Pierre Alves**. "Then, as the race progressed and the racing line dried out, there was a switch to our SOFT and MEDIUM slicks."



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“When the thermometer dipped beneath the 20°C mark and the track temperature fell to as low as 18°C after sunset, there was demand for our ‘SOFT Cold’ option which was developed with such chilly conditions in mind. As things warmed up again on Sunday morning, the SOFT and MEDIUM compounds reappeared. Choosing the ideal moment to switch from one option to another played a fundamental role in the outcome and our team of Technical Advisors worked closely with our partners to help them optimise the performance, consistency and longevity of their tyres over the weekend.”

This year, Michelin supplied tyres to 36 of the 61 cars on the grid, including all five Hypercar prototypes, the eight LM GTE Pro runners and the 23 cars competing in LMGTE Am.

“I believe our 24th consecutive Le Mans victory speaks volumes for the consistency not only of our tyres but also of Michelin’s commitment to motorsport, and more especially endurance racing,” underlined Michelin Motorsport Director **Matthieu Bonardel**. “Today’s technologically-sophisticated cars mark a break with the past and we were taking absolutely nothing for granted before the start of this weekend’s race. The quality that our tyres revealed once the race was under way stems from the extensive groundwork Michelin Motorsport carried out in association with its partner teams and drivers. I would like to take this opportunity to congratulate all our Hypercar partners, as well as Ferrari and AF Corse, of course, because there was a lot at stake at Le Mans this year. It was an intense race and that makes the result all the more satisfying. It was also wonderful to see spectators back in the grandstands to support the competitors in the world’s greatest endurance race.”

The next round of the 2021 FIA World Endurance Championship will take teams to Bahrain on October 30 for a six-hour race, followed by an eight-hour clash at the same venue on November 8.

Michelin, the leading mobility company, is dedicated to enhancing its clients’ mobility, sustainably; designing and distributing the most suitable tires, services and solutions for its clients’ needs; providing digital services, maps and guides to help enrich trips and travels and make them unique experiences; and developing high-technology materials that serve a variety of industries. Headquartered in Clermont-Ferrand, France, Michelin is present in 170 countries, has 123,600 employees and operates 71 tire production facilities which together produced around 170 million tires in 2020. (www.michelin.com)

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