

MICHELIN MANAGES ALL WEATHERS AT AN UNPREDICTABLE LE MANS

Michelin's range of MotoGP™ tyres were thoroughly put through their paces during this weekend's Shark Helmets Grand Prix de France in Le Mans as ever-changing weather meant that no two sessions were the same conditions ahead of today's race which was won by Marc Marquez (Repsol Honda Team).

Friday's practices were held in clear sunny weather, with afternoon conditions almost perfect. This led to five of the six MICHELIN Power Slick tyres being tried - only the hard front wasn't evaluated - and some very fast lap-times were recorded. Saturday saw a complete change as rain fell around the 4,185m Bugatti Circuit at Le Mans. The MICHELIN Power Rain tyres then took centre stage and produced excellent grip in the wet, letting the riders push to the limit, with some impressive angles of lean through the track's 14 corners. Marquez took pole in the damp and greasy conditions of the afternoon, but none of the sessions prepared the riders for the drop in temperature on Sunday.

Overcast skies and a cool breeze meant track temperature were 16°C at the start of the 27-lap race. These cooler conditions forced all the riders to use the soft front and rear MICHELIN Power Slick tyres, with just one rider opting for a medium front. As the lights changed to signal go, Marquez got the drive from the line and led into the first corner, he held this position for four-laps before coming under threat from Jack Miller (Pramac Racing). The Ducati-riding Australian took first on the following lap and led for the next two circulations, before Marquez retook the lead, a position he would not relinquish again and took the chequered flag to seal his third win of the season and strengthen his championship lead. The victory also gave Honda its 300th win in the premier class, many of which have been won on Michelin rubber.

The battle for the remaining podium places came down to a three-way Ducati battle. Andrea Dovizioso (Ducati Team) and Danilo Petrucci (Ducati Team) both caught and passed Miller, before having an enthralling contest in the closing stages. They pushed their Michelin soft rubber to the limits and swapped positions a number of times, before Dovizioso took the flag for second, Petrucci followed him home with Miller fourth, a position which secured the Australian the position of First Independent Rider. Valentino Rossi (Monster Energy Yamaha MotoGP) was fifth, with Pol Espargaro (Red Bull KTM Factory Racing) in sixth giving KTM its best dry weather finish since entering MotoGP in 2017. Franco Morbidelli (Petronas Yamaha SRT) was seventh and hard-charging local hero Fabio Quartararo (Petronas Yamaha SRT) took eighth in his debut home MotoGP race. Ninth across the line was Cal Crutchlow (LCR Honda), with Alex Rins (Team SUZUKI ECSTAR) rounding out the top-ten.

Today's race saw 104,020 fans pack into the historic Le Mans circuit for Michelin's home Grand Prix, and the big crowd added to the weekend figures which saw more than 204,000 people at trackside throughout the three-days, despite the bad weather on Saturday, and these figures again cement France's position as the best attended Grand Prix of the season.

Michelin will now head to Italy for round six of the season as MotoGP moves to the complex Mugello Circuit in Tuscany, where the riders will commence their rivalries on Sunday 2nd June, in what is already a very intriguing championship.



Marc Marquez - Repsol Honda Team:

“It has been a tricky weekend with the weather, it was very cold, but Michelin did a great job because they covered all the range and all the issues with the racetrack, because it was so cold and also wet on Saturday. We were able to ride in a good way with the soft front and rear today and also yesterday in the wet. We had to adapt today because we never used the soft for more than four-laps, but I saw in the warm-up that the others were using the soft and going fast. I am happy because I did a great job, happy because the team worked in a good way and happy because Repsol Honda deserved this victory and Honda also deserved its 300th victory in the premier class.”

Piero Taramasso - Michelin Motorsport Two-Wheel Manager:

“This has been a weekend of very differing conditions and one that has been tricky for all concerned, On Friday we had some good weather and the slicks performed very well with some impressive lap-times, but that all changed on Saturday as the rain arrived. This did give us the first real opportunity of some wet weather evaluation this season and again the rain tyres performed extremely well - I was especially pleased to see the four rookies adapt to them so quickly. Today’s race was very cold and some riders - including Marc - had very little track time with the soft slick tyres here this weekend, but with the conditions as they were, it was the best decision for the majority to run with a soft front and rear. The race was very interesting and the compounds performed really well, with consistent and fast lap-times and they also gave good stability and durability around this stop-and-go layout. We are pleased with how all the tyres worked this weekend, we would always prefer consistent conditions, but when it is like this it just confirms that we have rubber to match all situations.”



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