



MEDIA INFORMATION
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2015 FIA World Endurance Championship (WEC)
6 Hours of Bahrain

Porsche and Michelin clinch the season's FIA WEC Drivers' crown and LM GTE Cups in Bahrain to add to their 2015 Manufacturers' title

The 2015 FIA World Endurance Championship (WEC) concluded with Michelin's partner Porsche claiming the top prizes in both the LM P1 and LM GTE Pro classes. Following its return to world class endurance racing in 2014, the Stuttgart brand emerged as the discipline's team to beat this season despite year-long pressure from fellow Michelin runners Audi (in LM P1) and Ferrari (in LM GTE Pro).

By providing tyres developed to meet the specific needs of its different manufacturer teams in this championship which permits open competition between tyre firms, Michelin enabled all of its partners and drivers to fight at the sharp end in the course of the 2015 season. "I would like to congratulate Porsche on its different titles and I am proud of the role Michelin played in its success," said Michelin Motorsport Director **Pascal Couasnon**. "We work closely with all of our partners and we were at their side throughout this year's FIA WEC which was of an extremely high level in both sporting and technological terms. It's important to remember that this year's cars marked a big step forward, especially the LM P1 prototypes which boasted power outputs and aerodynamic downforce of an unprecedented level."

The performance, durability and versatility of Michelin's 2015 range of endurance racing tyres were illustrated by the high grip they delivered in cold weather at Silverstone and Spa, the quadruple-plus stints they permitted in LM P1 at Le Mans, their consistency and also their ability to double stint at the season's most exacting circuits in high temperatures.

"Once again, the 6 Hours of Bahrain showcased Michelin's capacity to develop tyres that match the different needs of its partners and the specific challenge of each circuit," notes **Jérôme Mondain**, manager of Michelin's endurance racing programme. "The bigger selection we had in Bahrain enabled Audi and Porsche to run different race strategies and offset pit-stop schedules."

In LM P1, Audi and Porsche were the front-runners in the 6 Hours of Bahrain which started in daylight and ended after nightfall as the two German teams dived for the 2015 Drivers' title which changed hands several times.

It started out on the hands of Porsche which followed up its domination of qualifying with a strong start. It then became the property of Audi which led for a spell with its two cars before the N°17 Porsche's trio grabbed the crown for good on Lap 110.

The drivers of both teams contributed to a thrilling race which provided some breath-taking passing manoeuvres, differing race strategies and some exceptional driving skill.

Lotterer/Fässler/Tréluyer (N°7 Audi R18 e-tron quattro) gave everything they had in their bid to win the Drivers' crown, even when their chase appeared to be a lost cause. They ended up having to settle for second place in the race behind Dumas/Jani/Lieb (N°18 Porsche 919 Hybrid) who made the most of their car's efficiency to produce a surefooted display and win the 2015 6 Hours of Bahrain.



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Meanwhile, technical problems saw Di Grassi/Duval/Jarvis (N°8 Audi) drop from first to sixth place, preventing them from aiding their team-mates' title chances.

It was a tough race, too, for Bernhard/Webber/Hartley (N°17 Porsche) after their car was forced to pit on Lap 17 to attend to a throttle problem.

They ended up taking the flag in fifth place but, thanks to the win of the N°18 Porsche, that sufficed to claim the 2015 Drivers' title, a fitting reward for their straight wins at the Nürburgring, Austin, Fuji and Shanghai.

Porsche and Michelin win the LM GTE Manufacturers' and Drivers' Cups

The 6 Hours of Bahrain saw the Stuttgart firm take the top prize in LM GTE Pro, too. Although the N°92 Porsche 911 RSR of Pilet/Makowiecki failed to figure well in qualifying, it went on to dominate the race. Patrick Pilet, who was nominated to start, overtook several cars to appear in front after half-an-hour. Fellow Frenchman Frédéric Makowiecki then finished off the job to collect the win ahead of the N°51 Ferrari 458 Italia (Bruni/Vilander) which failed to match the lap times of the German machine.

Rigon/Calado (N°71 Ferrari 458 Italia) were initially slightly off the pace but they fought back to pass the Aston Martins before a pit-stop problem put paid to their remaining chances of winning the Drivers' title and clinching the top Manufacturers' prize for the Italian make.

The winner of the 2015 FIA Drivers' Cup was Richard Lietz (N°91 Porsche 919 RSR), even though the consistent Austrian could manage no better than fifth in Bahrain.

LM GTE Am honours for SMP Racing and Michelin

The LM GTE Am Trophy went to SMP Racing's Shaytar/Bertolini/Basov who benefited from a perfectly-managed season by the Sergey Zlobin-run squad. Along with the skilled Andrea Bertolini, the two Russian drivers succeeded in warding off the threat of fellow Ferrari runners Perrodo/Collard/Cressoni (AF Corse), the latter standing in for Aguas at the season's finale.

"It's been a successful year in terms of the lessons we have learnt and the titles we have won," concludes Pascal Couasnon, "but Michelin is already preparing for 2016 when the GTE Pro cars will not only be more powerful but will also generate between 10 and 15 percent more aerodynamic downforce. There will be improvements to the LM P1 cars, too, and our development engineers are already working on these changes."