

FIA World Endurance Championship (FIA WEC) 2014 6 Hours of Silverstone

One-two success for MICHELIN and Toyota Racing

A first podium finish for MICHELIN and Porsche Motorsport

This year, Audi Sport Team Joest and Toyota Racing aren't the only favourites for the World Endurance Championship's LM P1 title. They have effectively been joined by Porsche Motorsport whose 919 Hybrid also races on Michelin tyres. The new prototype proved competitive from the weekend's very first free practice session and the car shared by Dumas/Jani/Lieb qualified third on the grid.

The exciting start to the race itself saw Toyota Racing emerge in front early on, but the N°2 Audi R18 e-tron quattro eventually took control after a duel that lasted half-an-hour. When a short shower of rain fell, however, the N°7 Toyota TS 040 Hybrid was quick to switch to rain tyres, while the Audi stayed out on slicks and was ultimately dislodged from the top of the leaderboard. Meanwhile, the N°8 Toyota had changed to the MICHELIN Hybrid tyre which helped it to move up to second place as the N°14 Porsche spent 16 minutes in its pits for repairs.

After 1h15m of racing, the N°7 and N°8 Toyota TS 040 Hybrids topped the order, with the N°20 Porsche now on the provisional podium.

As the conditions dried, though, the MICHELIN Hybrid became the most judicious choice and the N°8 Toyota was able to overtake the N°7 sister car which was still on 'wets'. After that, the order didn't change until the finish which was came ahead of the scheduled duration because of torrential rain.

The MICHELIN Hybrid tyre decisive, but all the solutions used

The superior performance of the MICHELIN Hybrid was showcased while the conditions were damp. There was a time difference of more than five seconds per lap between the two Toyotas (one on 'Hybrid' tyres and the other on wets) and the gap was as much as 20 seconds per lap compared with the N°2 Audi R18 e-tron quattro which was on slick tyres.

Indeed, all the different types of tyre available for Silverstone were employed at one point during the race. "Today's conditions saw our full range of tyres come out at one time or another, from our 'low temperature' slick to our rain tyre, via the 'hybrid' slick," observes **Jérôme MONDAIN**, manager of MICHELIN's endurance racing programmes. "We are extremely pleased with the performance they delivered, and that confirms the validity of the selection we will have available for Le Mans, in June. We are especially happy with the MICHELIN Hybrid. Although it looks like a slick, it proved competitive and very versatile in the damp, which speaks a great deal for the values championed by our MICHELIN Total Performance* concept."

In LM P2, SMP Racing's two ORECA 03-Nissans – which are new to the class – were also on Michelin tyres and qualified in third and fourth places in their category. Unfortunately, they both suffered technical problems during the race's first hour. One of the two cars failed to finish, but the other was able to continue after a 30-minute pit-stop for repairs."



Meanwhile, the adverse weather conditions allowed Michelin to validate its recent development work on specific new rain tyres for the LMGTE Pro cars. “They performed strongly even outside their ideal operating window, when the track was drying,” notes Jérôme MONDAIN.

The second round of the 2014 FIA World Endurance Championship will visit Spa-Francorchamps in Belgium’s Ardennes Mountains on May 3. It will be the teams’ final dress rehearsal ahead of this year’s Le Mans 24 Hours on June 14-15.

** The MICHELIN Total Performance concept, which underpins all Michelin’s research and development work, consists in reconciling qualities often believed to be antagonistic in a single tyre in order to deliver a very high level of performance thanks to the use of unique technologies.*

