

6 Hours of BAHRAIN (September 29, 2012)
2012 FIA World Endurance Championship – Round 6

More success for MICHELIN in the Bahraini desert

MICHELIN's partners AUDI, FERRARI and PORSCHE all claimed wins in their respective classes at the 6 Hours of Bahrain. The sixth round of the 2012 FIA World Endurance Championship clash was the first visit of endurance racing prototypes to Sakhir which provided the backdrop to a gruelling contest for the drivers, machines and MICHELIN tyres because of searing heat and the presence of sand on the track which added to the challenge.

The LM P1 class saw the N°1 AUDI R18 e-tron Quattro of A. LOTTERER / B. TRELUYER / M. FASSLER win the 2012 6 Hours of Bahrain ahead of the German team's N°2 sister car (T. KRISTENSEN / A. McNISH). The N°7 TOYOTA TS300 Hybrid (A. WURZ / N. LAPIERRE) led until Lap 74 but was delayed by a race-number lighting issue before being eliminated by a collision with the N°21 car on Lap 145.

The LM P1 cars started the race on 'high temperature' soft-compound MICHELIN Endurance tyres and track temperatures remained as high as 35°C even after darkness had fallen over the circuit. Most competitors decided to change tyres after every stint, the exception being TOYOTA who had just switched to a double-stint strategy before the retirement of the TS300 Hybrid.

The GTE Pro class was won by the N°51 AF CORSE FERRARI F458 Italia of Giancarlo FISICHELLA and Toni VILANDER, ahead of the N°97 ASTON MARTIN Vantage V8 (S. MÜCKE / D. TURNER). The success in Bahrain seals the LMGTE Manufacturers' World Cup for the Italian marque and the LMGTE Pro Teams' title for AF Corse, with two races remaining. Despite running a big air restrictor and being penalised by the maximum amount of fuel it could carry (85 litres), the N°51 FERRARI still succeeded in taking the top prize in Bahrain thanks notably to the performance of its MICHELIN tyres.

The winner of the GTE AM battle was the N°88 FELBER MAYR-PROTON PORSCHE 911 RSR (C. RIED / G. RODA / P. RUBERTI), ahead of AF CORSE – WALTRIP's N°61 FERRARI F458 Italia (R. KAUFFMAN / B. VICKERS / R. AGUAS).

Serge GRISIN, the manager of MICHELIN Competition's four-wheel motorsport programmes, was pleased with the performance of his tyres in Bahrain, as well as with the data collected by the French firm's technical staff: "The 6 Hours of Bahrain was the first endurance race to be held at Sakhir. We had little information to work on for these cars before our arrival. Even so, the 'high temperature' soft-compound MICHELIN Endurance tyres lived up to the expectations of our partners despite the heat and the presence of sand on the track. On top of that, the large amount of data we succeeded in collecting during the race will contribute to the development of new MICHELIN Endurance tyres for 2013. I would like to congratulate AUDI, FERRARI and PORSCHE on their wins this weekend, but our other partners and drivers also deserve praise since the suffocating heat and sand proved just as big a test for the teams and cars as it did for their MICHELIN tyres."

The next round of the FIA World Endurance Championship will take teams to Japan for the 6 Hours of Fuji on October 14.

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