

**FIA World Endurance Championship 2019/2020
8 Hours of Bahrain – Round 8 (final)**

***Tyre consistency plays central role at
2020 8 Hours of Bahrain***

- *Michelin Motorsport's experience pays in low-grip conditions*
- *A one-two finish for the Toyota TS050 Hybrid to mark the last competitive appearance of endurance racing's Hybrid LM P1 prototypes*
- *A clean sweep of all the 2019/2020 FIA WEC titles for Michelin's partners*

The 2020 8 Hours of Bahrain set the scene for the final round of the 2019/2020 FIA World Endurance which was significantly impacted by the Covid-19 pandemic, leading to a shake-up of the original calendar and the introduction of strict sanitary measures. In Bahrain, for example, a facility at the circuit allowed all those who attended to be tested on-site, with results available extremely quickly. Sadly, however, the event was marked by the death of the kingdom's Prime Minister and the authorities paid tribute to Prince Khalifa bin Salman Al Khalifa by cancelling all of the meeting's support races.

With less track action to sweep the racing line, the incessant wind that blew sand onto the track prior to the race led to slower conditions for this year's FIA WEC visit to Bahrain. The lap times posted by the LMP2 prototypes, for example, were two seconds down compared with 2019 on the slippery surface which put tyres to a particularly tough test.

Tyre consistency was consequently one of the keys to success at the 2019/2020 championship's final round.

"Following the delicate track conditions that marked the three Free Practice sessions, our technical staff worked closely with our partners to help fine-tune their respective strategies and car set-ups in order to strike the most effective balance between outright performance and tyre longevity," notes **Pierre Alves**, the manager of Michelin's endurance racing programmes.

The 2020 8 Hours of Bahrain produced a one-two finish for Toyota Gazoo Racing, spearheaded by the N°7 Toyota TS050 Hybrid of Mike Conway, Kamui Kobayashi and Jose Maria Lopez who succeeded in clinching the 2019/2020 Drivers' crown to add to the Teams' title which the Japanese make sewed up at Le Mans in September.

Toyota Gazoo Racing's victory marks the end of endurance racing's Hybrid LM P1 era which will be remembered for the cars' avant-garde technologies and the big demands they placed on tyres.

"The Hybrid LM P1s evolved considerably over the nine seasons they competed and that presented us with a succession of challenges," underlines **Pierre Alves**. "Due to their powerful engines, their high top speeds and the exceptional aerodynamic downforce they generated, these technologically-sophisticated prototypes kept pushing and pushing our engineers, yet we succeeded in developing tyres that were capable of completing up to five stints at Le Mans – equivalent to 750 kilometres – with little degradation. In 2014, Michelin even reduced the size and weight of its LMP1 tyres by 15 percent with no impact on either their performance potential or consistency."



“Right up to this season, we have never stopped improving our LMP1-H range and that work has helped us to score three Le Mans wins and the same number of FIA WEC titles in association with Toyota Gazoo Racing.”

The 2020 8 Hours of Bahrain also spelled the end of Michelin’s adventure in LM P2. After winning the class at Le Mans and claiming the Teams’ and Drivers’ WEC and ELMS titles with United Autosports, Michelin is bowing out for 2021 when the class will feature a control tyre formula.

“I would like to thank all those teams who placed their trust in Michelin and who obtained the level of results they were targeting,” adds **Pierre Alves**. “It’s a shame we will no longer be involved in LMP2, but we now turn our attention to the new hypercars. Having initially focused on simulator work, the time has come for track testing to begin as we develop two distinct ranges to cover the hypercars’ broad spectrum of characteristics.”

The LM GTE Pro race in Bahrain saw Porsche GT Team clinch first and second places, while Aston Martin Racing added to its 2019/2020 FIA WEC Manufacturers’ title by securing the GT Drivers’ crown with Marco Sorensen and Nicki Thiim.

Last but not least, second place in LM GTE Am in Bahrain sufficed for AF Corse and François Perrodo, Emmanuel Collard and Nicklas Nielsen to claim the class’s 2019/2020 top prizes.

“It’s been a very positive campaign for Michelin,” concludes **Pierre Alves**. “The people who run the FIA WEC and the ACO did a first class job in overcoming the hurdles they faced and making it a truly absorbing season. All those involved in the championship delivered a high level of performance both on and off the track. I would also like to salute the work of everyone at Michelin Motorsport. It hasn’t been an easy year but their passion pulled them through it. The fact that we ended up winning all the titles that were up for grabs is the best imaginable reward for their efforts and we are very proud to have achieved a clean sweep.”

