

### **MICHELIN AND DOVIZIOSO SPLASH THROUGH THE VALENCIAN GLOOM**

Michelin had its MotoGP™ rain tyres pushed to the extremes of grip and performance through the awful conditions during the Gran Premio Motul de la Comunitat Valenciana in Spain today which saw Andrea Dovizioso (Ducati Team) take victory in a restarted race.

The weather at this weekend's final race of the season had played a massive part in the proceedings, with heavy rain on Friday and Saturday giving the riders and teams no time to set-up for the dry conditions they faced in qualifying on Saturday. Torrential rain soaked the track for the first sessions of the weekend, but the MICHELIN Power Rain tyres coped with these conditions and aided the riders to set lap-times which were only just over eight seconds off the record for a dry lap. Following yesterday's dry qualifying Maverick Viñales (Movistar Yamaha MotoGP) took Pole Position and as today's scheduled race got underway Alex Rins (Team SUZUKI ECSTAR) got the holeshot and led for the initial part of the race. Then the rain started to fall very heavily and puddles appeared on the track, causing a number of riders to crash due to the conditions, a situation which forced the organisers to red flag the race for safety reasons.

Following a short delay, the rain eased and drained from the 4,005m track and a 14-lap restart was announced with riders starting from the position they finished the first race. This gave Rins the first spot on the grid and he again capitalised by making the holeshot once again. The Suzuki man couldn't maintain that position and was passed by Dovizioso, as the already confirmed championship runner-up took control and pulled away at the front, eventually taking the chequered flag and setting the fastest lap in the process. Rins took second, a result which gave him fifth in the championship and Suzuki's fourth successive podium, the first time since 1994. Third went to Pol Espargaro (Red Bull KTM Factory Racing), securing the first top-three position of his career in MotoGP and the first podium for the Austrian manufacturer since it entered the class in 2017. The podium of Ducati, Suzuki and KTM not only had three different manufacturers, but was the first time since Misano 2007, that Honda or Yamaha had not taken one of the top-three spots, this again highlights Michelin's dedication and desire to provide tyres - wet or dry - that all teams and riders can use.

The wet weather did not deter the Valencian fans, as a crowd of 97,201 braved the rain to witness their heroes in battle. Michele Pirro (Ducati Team) took fourth, whilst a special cheer was given to Dani Pedrosa (Repsol Honda Team) as he crossed the line in fifth in his last ever race, on a weekend which also saw him inducted as a MotoGP Legend. His points were also enough to secure the Team Championship for Repsol Honda, wrapping up a hat-trick for the Japanese marque after it had already taken the Rider and Constructor titles. Takaaki Nakagami (LCR Honda) recorded his best result of the season in sixth, which also gave him the honour of First Independent Rider for the first time in his career. Johann Zarco (Monster Yamaha Tech 3) came home in seventh, taking the Independent Rider title in the process in a race which was his last on a Yamaha before he moves to KTM. Bradley Smith (Red Bull KTM Factory Racing) also produced his best result of the year, in what was his last ride for the team, as he came home in eighth. Stefan Bradl (LCR Honda) was replacing the injured Cal Crutchlow and he brought his bike home in ninth, with Hafizh Syahrin (Monster Yamaha Tech 3) taking tenth. To round out the championships, Franco Morbidelli (EG 0,0 Marc VDS) took the Rookie of the Year award, narrowly beating Syahrin and Alma Pramac Racing took the Independent Team title.

Due to the very wet track, all riders began the restarted race with the soft compound option front and rear rain tyres, with only Rins opting for a medium front. In the first race there was more of a split between the front compounds, with everyone except Marc Marquez (Repsol Honda Team) choosing the medium rear. In the dry conditions the riders were able to make considered decisions as to what they would have used in a dry race, and if the rain had kept away, five of the six compounds had been provisionally chosen by the field.

Michelin and the MotoGP field will now remain at Valencia for a two-day test on Tuesday and Wednesday, before then heading to Jerez in Spain for a further two-day test next week as the preparations for 2019 begin in earnest ahead of the season starter, which is scheduled for Qatar in March.



**Tim Walpole** – [tim.walpole@motocom.co.uk](mailto:tim.walpole@motocom.co.uk) – Phone: +44.7976.397.265

**Alessandro Barlozzi** – [alessandro.barlozzi@michelin.com](mailto:alessandro.barlozzi@michelin.com) – Phone: +33.6.42.23.55.93

**Andrea Dovizioso – Ducati Team:**

“The front tyre worked very well and I used both, the medium in the first race and the soft in the restart. The rear was good, but when the rain became so heavy it was very difficult conditions on the track. I had no issues with the tyres at all, it was just so difficult to stay on the bike, because the conditions in the first race after 10-laps were very bad.”

**Piero Taramasso – Michelin Motorsport Two-Wheel Manager:**

“This has been a very challenging weekend with all the rain, but one that has again shown the versatility of the Michelin tyres to match to different bikes in varying conditions. We had three different bikes on the podium, six different ones in the top-six in heavy rain on Friday and in yesterday’s dry qualifying session just 0.3 seconds separated the six different marques in the top-eight positions. This is especially pleasing for us as it highlights what we are trying to achieve, by supplying tyres for all to perform at their peak. In the wet we had some very fast times, the top guys were just eight-seconds off the dry record and this is on a track surface that gives low grip, once again demonstrating the high grip levels of the MICHELIN Power Rain tyres.

“Michelin has had a successful season, with records broken and a huge amount of data collected in all types of conditions which we will use in the evolution of both slick and rain tyres, as we continue with the development of the tyres for 2019 and beyond. We are constantly working to supply the best tyres to give optimum performance to all riders, teams and manufacturers and this will not decrease, because we constantly want to improve.”

“I want to pass on my thanks to the whole Michelin team for their unstinting work for the whole of this season and to give my congratulations to all the champions within this season’s MotoGP campaign, now it’s straight on to 2019 and what we hope will be another exciting season.”



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