

**2019/2020 FIA World Endurance Championship
Round 2: 6 Hours of Fuji**

***The WEC returns to Fuji Speedway where tyre strategies
promise to play a big role once again***

Can a tyre lead to a race being lost? No, but insufficiently weighed-up strategies can influence the way endurance races unfold.

Can a tyre lead to a race being won? Yes, if it contributes to addressing the challenges inherent in a closely-fought race at an uncharacteristic racetrack and/or in changeable weather conditions.

And when it comes to venues where the drivers frequently have to contend with uncommon circumstances, Fuji Speedway readily springs to mind...

Located close to the famous mountain of the same name, Fuji Speedway is this week hosting Round 2 of the 2019/2020 FIA World Endurance Championship (WEC). Built in 1965, this 4.563-kilometre track features an atypical layout, including a 1.5-kilometre straight which stands out as the second longest of the season after the Mulsanne Straight at Le Mans. Setting up the cars here is a complex exercise for the teams due to the combination of this long straight and the twisty infield, with particular attention needed for the portions between Turns 3 and 8 and between Turns 10 and 16. The lap consequently calls for opposing levels of downforce, and one option for the teams is to run a low-downforce set-up to favour top speed along the straight and count on the mechanical grip provided by their car's tyres to generate cornering grip.

This sort of configuration puts significant constraints on tyres, and the situation is made more complex still by the frequently fickle weather that often greets the WEC regulars in this part of Japan situated in countryside between the sea and Mount Fuji.

For the 2019 6 Hours of Fuji 2019, the weather experts are predicting a mix of clear and cloudy skies, with the possibility of rain for Friday's free practice sessions. Meanwhile, temperatures are expected to fluctuate between 22°C on Friday and Sunday (race day) and 27°C on Saturday.

"Fuji Speedway compels the teams to make a clear-cut choice when it comes to their race strategy," says **Pierre Alves**, the manager of Michelin's endurance racing programmes. "The cars' aero set-ups can play a key role in how the race unfolds, while the twistiest portions put tyres to a demanding test in terms of grip and consistency. This year, the weather is expected to be milder than for previous visits but our team advisers are still in for a busy time. If it rains during free practice, we will have little data to assist our partners when it comes to choosing between the two slick options."

For the 2019 6 Hours of Fuji, Michelin's partners in all four classes (LM P1, LM P2, LM GTE Pro and LM GTE Am) will be able to choose between a SOFT and a MEDIUM slick, while WET and FULL WET alternatives will also be available in the case of rain, as well as the versatile MICHELIN Hybrid slick for the LM P1 prototypes for drying conditions.

