

2018/2019 FIA World Endurance Championship  
Round 5: 6 Hours of Shanghai

***Tyre longevity and consistency: two keys to Shanghai success***

The next round of the 2018/2019 FIA World Endurance Championship takes teams to China for this weekend's 6 Hours of Shanghai. This fixture has traditionally been held at the back-end of the season and, as a consequence, has frequently settled fights for the different FIA WEC titles. This time around, however, the context is different since Shanghai is only the fifth encounter of the competition's 2018/2019 super-season.

In spite of this change, the Chinese clash promises to be as crucial as ever, not just as a showcase in this major local market for the technology championed by the sport and its players, but also on the sporting front, since the 6 Hours of Shanghai invariably offers a close, gruelling race.

Shanghai International Circuit is an atypical venue, with a unique profile and a track surface that is exceptionally hard on tyres. The 5.451-kilometre loop, which was penned by the German architect Hermann Tilke, features several short straights separated by slow turns, plus two much longer straights.

The combination of high aerodynamic downforce, repeated heavy braking and hard reacceleration through the twisty portions, and the track's particularly abrasive asphalt means that tyres are exposed to particularly harsh treatment.

Judicious tyre choices and careful tyre management are therefore poised to play a decisive role in Shanghai once more, especially as the weather is likely to be quite changeable. Forecasters are affectively predicting covered skies from Thursday, with rain due to sweep over the city from Friday afternoon until Saturday evening, before conditions improve and become drier for race day when the thermometer is expected to rise to 19°C.

"Shanghai is the most demanding venue of the season as far as tyre-wear and degradation are concerned because of the abrasive nature of the track surface," observes **Jérôme Mondain**, the manager of the Michelin's endurance racing programmes. "The circuit's profile and hallmark slow, tightening turns add to the challenge due to the low aerodynamic downforce generated by the cars at low speeds when it's down to the tyres to provide the required grip. At the same time, tyres will need to deliver consistent performance when double-stinting, a tactic that cannot be avoided because of the regulations. Getting tyre choices right and sound tyre management are consequently poised to play key roles when it comes to deciding race strategies."

Michelin's partners in all four classes will be able to choose between HARD and MEDIUM slicks for the 2018 6 Hours of Shanghai. In LM GTE Am, however, where the rules allow tyres to be changed at every fuel stop, some teams have opted for a combination of MEDIUM and SOFT slicks. For wet weather, WETs and FULL WETs will be available, along with the MICHELIN Hybrid, a competitive, versatile alternative designed for the LM P1 prototypes in drying conditions.

