

MICHELIN AND MARQUEZ TAKE A RECORD IN MALAYSIA

Michelin saw its MotoGP™ tyres take the race duration record at the Sepang International Circuit this afternoon as Marc Marquez (Repsol Honda Team) secured victory in today's Shell Malaysia Motorcycle Grand Prix.

Michelin and the MotoGP field faced the highest track temperatures of the weekend before today's 20-lap race, as the sun heated up the asphalt to 53°C. This led to a tyre choice by the grid, which although featuring four of the six available compounds, favoured a selection of a medium front and soft rear MICHELIN Power Slick. This afternoon's race had already taken on a different feel as weather forecasts for heavy rain at the 5,543m track forced the organisers to bring the race forward by two hours to miss the expected downpour. As it was the rain never materialised at the earlier time and the whole event was run in dry and warm conditions, which led to the race duration record being broken by more than five-seconds as the main protagonists pushed the tyres to the extremes of performance in the hot conditions. Marquez took victory - this also sealed the constructor championship for Honda - but not after an eventful lead up to the race. The reigning champion set the best time in qualifying to secure Pole Position in a wet qualifying session yesterday after torrential rain had delayed Saturday's proceedings, but an infringement on another rider saw him relegated six places to seventh on the grid and Frenchman Johann Zarco (Monster Yamaha Tech 3) inherit the pole. As the lights changed it was Valentino Rossi (Movistar Yamaha MotoGP) who got the holeshot and then led the race for the next 17-laps, but with Marquez hunting him down, Rossi pushed to sustain his lead and crashed, leaving the Spaniard to take over at the front and ride to victory.

With Marquez crossing the line in first, the battle for the remaining podium places raged on as Alex Rins (Team SUZUKI ECSTAR) - setting the fastest lap of the race in the process - fought through the field from eighth on the grid, before catching and passing Zarco in the closing stages to take second, leaving the Yamaha-man to secure third and the position of First Independent Rider, a result that moves him to the top of those standings. Encounters throughout the pack entertained a record crowd for Sepang of 103,984 people at trackside, as they witnessed Maverick Viñales (Movistar Yamaha MotoGP) push from eleventh on the grid to take fourth, ahead of Dani Pedrosa (Repsol Honda Team). Andrea Dovizioso (Ducati Team) was sixth, a position that confirmed his runners-up spot in the championship. Alvaro Bautista (Angel Nieto Team), led a trio of Ducatis across the line as he took seventh, with Jack Miller (Alma Pramac Racing) and Danilo Petrucci (Alma Pramac Racing) coming home in eighth and ninth respectively. The top-ten was rounded out by a rider who received the biggest cheer of the day, with local hero Hafizh Syahrin (Monster Yamaha Tech 3) riding a superb race from last on the grid to take tenth, as he became the first Malaysian to race at his home Grand Prix in the MotoGP class.

The Malaysian Grand Prix brings to an end the four fly-away races which have seen Thailand, Japan, Australia and now Malaysia produce a whole array of weather and challenges which Michelin has faced and conquered throughout the five week tour. Today's event also saw the Moto3™ and Moto2™ Champions crowned as Jorge Martin and Francesco Bagnaia took their titles respectively, with the latter now moving to MotoGP for next season to become the latest star to race on Michelin tyres.

Michelin and MotoGP now return to Europe for the final race of 2018, as the paddock moves to the traditional season-ending event at Valencia in Spain on Sunday 18th November.



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Marc Marquez – Repsol Honda Team:

“Today was a really hard race, for us, for the bike, for the tyres, for everything, because the warmer temperatures made it really difficult. It was extremely hot today and you could feel this on the tyres, but the race pace was very fast. We were pushing hard from the beginning and it was not about managing tyre life, it was just pushing, pushing, pushing, it felt as though it was more like a qualifying practice! I was not thinking about tyre life or the championship, it was just about being there. It was a great fight with Valentino, it was not about overtaking, but were always close, one-tenth slower, one-tenth faster than each other all the time. In the end I was catching him, which was a great feeling, but he made a mistake and crashed, so I just rode the last few laps in an easy way.”

Piero Taramasso – Michelin Motorsport Two-Wheel Manager:

“This has been another Grand Prix where we have seen the tyres tested to extremes. The weekend began with lower temperatures than expected for Sepang on Friday - although still quite high - and the tyres performed really well and some very fast lap-times were set. This continued on Saturday morning and it looked like we were in a position to break the outright record in qualifying, but then it rained very heavily. This meant the MICHELIN Power Rain tyres were used in anger for one of the few times this year and again they gave excellent results in the difficult conditions. The times were quick and the grip was really good and it produced an exciting qualifying. Today then saw temperatures rise to more than we had seen all weekend and with the information the teams had and with the assistance from their respective technicians, the best tyres were chosen. This produced a fast race which saw us break the duration record, this is one of the most important time benchmarks for us, as it shows the durability and consistency over race distance. There were also three different manufacturers on the podium, which is again a very important marker for Michelin, as it shows performance for all types of bikes. This has been a long trip, but we have had some very good results, learned a lot about the overall performance of the slick and wet tyres and the different compounds in many changeable conditions. We now head back to Europe for the final round and then get ready to start testing for 2019.”



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