

**FIA Formula E Championship 2018/2019
Round 11: Julius Baer Swiss E-Prix**

The MICHELIN Pilot Sport tyres deliver in the Swiss E-Prix's 'Green Hell'

The circuit in Bern – the latest city to host a round of the FIA Formula E Championship – was described by the 2019 Swiss E-Prix's organisers as a blend of urban and 'bucolic', but the new venue's restful setting belied its inherent challenges which the drivers and spectators got to discover for the first time on Saturday morning when the cars took to the track for the first time. In addition to being hilly and narrow in places, a number of off-camber climbs and descents promised to make overtaking particularly hard and observers were swift to compare the circuit with Pau, in France, Macao, in China, and even with Germany's Nürburgring, familiarly known as the 'Green Hell'. And it was this term that the drivers used to describe their first impressions after the track walk, well before they had had an opportunity to sample it behind the wheel of their all-electric, MICHELIN PILOT Sport-equipped single-seaters.

It was expected that the cars would reach speeds in excess of 125kph around the 2.750km, anticlockwise, 14-turn circuit and the all-dry free practice session enabled the drivers to find their marks before gradually upping their pace. With the thermometer reading just 14°C, the early lap times were around the 1m23s mark, but Jean-Eric Vergne (DS Techeetah) managed to get that down to as low as 1m19.281s by the end of the session, aided by the fast warm-up performance and consistency of his Michelin tyres. The French driver improved further still in qualifying to claim pole position with a time of 1m18.813s.

The race itself kicked off with the track and air temperatures standing at 21°C and 20°C respectively, but the threat of rain failed to materialise and the asphalt was dry as the e-prix (45 minutes, plus 1 lap) got under way. A heavy shower swept over the city with two laps remaining of what turned out to be a fiercely-fought contest but Michelin's all-weather Formula E tyres enabled the drivers to keep pushing all the way to the chequered flag.

"Bern was something of a one-off in this season's Formula E Championship," commented **Serge Grisin**, the manager of Michelin's Formula E programme. "Because of its hilly profile, it was a little like Rome [Italy], but it was also reminiscent of Spa-Francorchamps [Belgium] and even Germany's Nürburgring, home of the famous 24-hour race where Michelin Motorsport is also competing this weekend. The e-prix in Bern was more of a sprint than an endurance race, of course, and the main features the drivers expect of their tyres in formula E is grip and traction, especially at such a varied circuit as this where almost every corner presented a unique and often tricky challenge."



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“The other priority is energy efficiency, since smart energy management plays a vital role as the drivers seek to keep pushing all the way to the finish, and the low rolling resistance of the MICHELIN Pilot Sport can influence the way races unfold. The Bern E-Prix was a big test both for us and the teams, but our latest-generation Formula E tyre rose to the occasion yet again.”

Today’s e-prix was the first motorsport event to be held in Bern since 1954. Indeed, racing was banned in the country from 1955 until 2017 when the law was changed to permit races featuring electric cars. There happens to be a Bern Grand Prix, but it is a running race.

Formula E’s second Swiss E-Prix (after Zürich in 2018) was won by DS Techeetah’s Jean-Eric Vergne, ahead of Mitch Evans (Jaguar Racing) and Sébastien Buemi (Nissan-e.dams). The last two rounds of the 2018/2019 ABB FIA Formula E Championship will take place on July 13-14 in New York, USA.



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