
ZURICH, SWITZERLAND, FEBRUARY 2020

Marrakesh E-Prix Preview

- Race 5, February 29th 2020 in Marrakesh, Morocco
 - Population of 1,003,000
 - Elevation: 457 meters (1,499 feet)
 - Good to know: With minimal petroleum production, Morocco is deeply committed to renewable energy projects, including wind and solar generation
- Circuit Automobile International Moulay El Hassan
 - Number of turns: 12
 - Track length: 3.0km (1.9 miles)
 - Highlight: The racecourse, one of the longest in ABB Formula E, combines city streets and a permanent track section to produce a notably smooth racing surface

With its two-race swing through South America and North America complete, the ABB FIA Formula E Championship now heads back across the Atlantic to Africa for the season's fifth round, in Marrakesh, Morocco on February 29.

So far, season 6 has delivered brilliant track action, with victories both by veterans and by the youngest winner ever, Maximilian Guenther of the BMW i Andretti team, who took the checkered flag in Santiago, Chile. The Marrakesh race confronts the dozen ABB Formula E teams with special challenges, as its 12-turn, 3.0km course makes use of both city streets and parts of an existing permanent racetrack, the Circuit Automobile International Moulay El Hassan.

Against the backdrop of the Atlas Mountains, the track snakes through a modern section of Marrakesh, yet is never far from the city's ancient medina, a UNESCO World Heritage site. Gaining approval to hold an international motorsports competition on city-center streets, alongside centuries-old architectural treasures, is a testament to the restrained sound levels of the fully electric cars and their zero-emissions operation.

Boosting the intensity of the competition this season is an increase of available power when Attack Mode is operational, now 235 kilowatts (320 horsepower), a measure intended to bring more passing during the 45-minute (plus one lap) races. Additionally, the fastest driver in each of the qualifying group stages earns championship points, adding an incentive to perform at peak even before the race begins.

Unlike most of its neighbors, Morocco has very limited petroleum production. To provide a sustainable energy supply for the country's 35 million people, ambitious solar and wind turbine projects have been established in several regions. ABB is a committed partner in Morocco's effort to generate more than half of the country's electricity needs from renewable sources by 2030.

For example, ABB is aligned with Energie Eolienne du Maroc, a leader in the energy sector, in building the country's first hybrid substation. Connecting a wind farm to the national power grid, it is designed to withstand the challenging weather conditions of the desert and the marine air conditions. ABB has also supplied critical components for the Jorf lasfar Energy Company's power station, one of the largest in the world, and provided transformers, inverters and motors for the Maghreb Steel mill.

Morocco's commitment to carbon-free energy production can be seen in other projects as well. The world's largest concentrated solar power complex – roughly the size of 3,500 football fields – is situated in the southern city of Ouarzazate.

Arriving in Morocco, ABB ambassador Sébastien Buemi, driving for the Nissan e.dams team, will be eager to improve on last year's points-earning finish. Buemi has won and finished second on the Marrakesh course in past years, taking advantage of the excellent surface to achieve a well-balanced car setup. He also arrives having finished third in the previous Mexico City race.

Coming into Marrakesh, New Zealander Mitch Evans of Panasonic Jaguar Racing holds the points lead for the drivers' championship thanks to his commanding Mexico win. The competition is tight: Alexander Sims of BMW i Andretti Motorsport trails by just a single point. BMW's lead in the teams' standings is more comfortable, at 14 points, thanks to its strong start to Season 6, with wins in Diriyah, Saudi Arabia, and Santiago, Chile. Jérôme D'Ambrosio of the Mahindra team, last year's winner in Marrakesh after the BMW team's cars collided and slipped from their 1-2 track positions, will be looking to repeat – and find redemption after his own troubled start to Season 6.

After Marrakesh, the series starts a two-stop European leg, opening on April 4 in Rome, Paris two weeks later. At both events, the Jaguar I-PACE eTROPHY support series will rejoin the action, relying on ABB Terra DC fast chargers to keep their batteries at proper charge levels.

As the premier all-electric motorsport series, the ABB Formula E Championship, representing 10 global automakers, has expanded its international reach this season with new race locations in Seoul, South Korea, and Jakarta, Indonesia. Contested on city street courses that are accessible to fans by public transportation, ABB Formula E races strive for efficiency with a schedule that packs all of the practice, qualifying and racing sessions for each round into a single day of on-track thrills.

The 13-race season concludes with a double-race weekend on July 25-26, when London returns to the schedule. Those final rounds will use an unprecedented indoor-outdoor course routed along the Thames waterfront and through the ExCeL London exhibition center.

The ABB FIA Formula E Championship is ABB's clear statement of e-mobility's viability and performance potential. ABB's technology leadership in the field has enabled the company's growth into a global leader in DC fast-charging systems for electric vehicles and resulted in sales of more than 13,000 DC fast chargers across more than 80 countries worldwide.

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