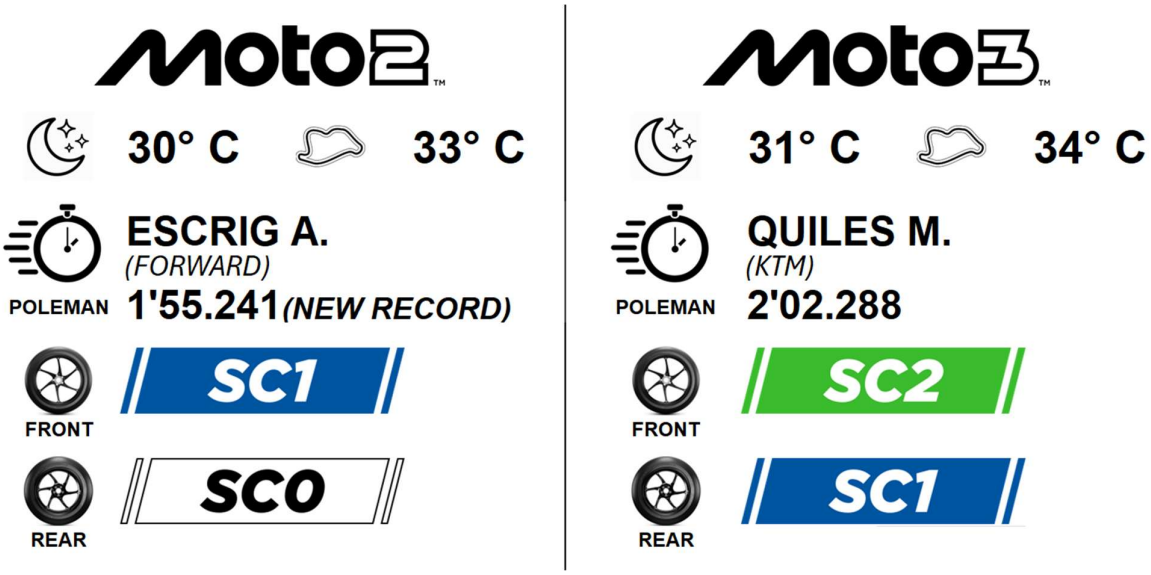
2026 Grand Prix of Qatar – Qualifying

7 November 2026

PRESS RELEASE

Escrig and Quiles shine under Qatar's stars with Moto2™ and Moto3™ poles

Escrig claims a historic pole for Forward and breaks the all-time lap record by over a second, thanks to Pirelli's new 2026 soft SC0 rear tyre



- **Maiden pole for Escrig and season first for Forward.** Spanish rider **Álex Escrig (Forward)** dominated the **Moto2™** qualifying at the **Grand Prix of Qatar**, securing his maiden pole position in the class and Forward's first of the season. With **1'55.241**, he also set the **new all-time lap record**, **over a second faster than the previous time of 1'56.301, set by Manuel Gonzalez in 2025**. Championship leader Gonzalez came in second, ahead of Daniel Holgado, both on Kalex. In qualifying, **all riders went with the soft SC1 front and soft SC0 rear combo** - Pirelli's most performance-oriented solution in the flying lap - with **16 riders lapping under the previous all-time lap record**.

- **Second consecutive pole for Quiles.** Newly crowned 2026 World Champion **Máximo Quiles (KTM)** clocked **2'02.288** on the third of the five laps he completed, just 0.012 seconds shy of the all-time lap record, and secured pole position for the **Moto3™** race. This was Quiles' second consecutive pole, after Malaysia, and his fourth of the season. David Almansa and Brian Uriarte qualified second and third, respectively, completing an all-KTM front row. In qualifying, **almost all riders opted for soft SC1 rear tyres, paired with either medium SC2 front, as Quiles and Uriarte did, or soft SC1 front tyres, as chosen by Almansa.**

- **Significant temperature swings between sessions.** Qatar is the only Grand Prix scheduled where races are held at night, while some of the sessions still take place in daylight, with air temperatures above 35°C and track temperatures around 50°C. After sunset, the track temperature can drop an astonishing 15°C, creating markedly different conditions between qualifying and the races. This year's qualifying took place at **ambient temperatures of around 30°C and track temperatures of 34°C**.



All-time Moto2™ lap record set with new 2026 soft rear tyre

"Escrig's new all-time Moto2™ lap record is especially meaningful for Pirelli, as it was set using the new standard soft SC0 rear tyre, which differs from the version employed at this circuit in 2025. Beating the previous record by over a second, the 2026 SC0 takes an incredible step forward performance-wise.
Although this year's Qatar Grand Prix is taking place in early November rather than April, temperatures are broadly in line with the last two editions. Between the early afternoon and evening sessions, track temperatures drop by around 15°C. Despite the lower temperatures and wind-blown sand on the track increasing tyre wear, especially when it comes to softer compounds, single-lap performance has improved. It is no coincidence that Practice and qualifying, which were both held after sunset, were the fastest sessions.
Under these conditions, riders were able to exploit the softer compounds to set their best lap times. However, consistent performance and tyre management over the race distance will be key, so tyre choices may differ. Just like in previous editions, we expect all Moto2™ riders to choose soft SC0 rear tyres, and to increasingly lean into the medium SC2 front option, compared to qualifying. However, in Moto3™, the medium SC2 tyre will likely be the most popular option at both ends, due to a more consistent performance over the race distance, compared with the soft SC1."