

2018 FIA World Rally Championship (WRC)

Round 12: RallyRACC Catalunya – Rally de Espana

Michelin's gravel and asphalt tyres ready for WRC's mixed-surface showpiece

Although this year's RallyRACC Catalunya – Rally de España is being run three weeks later than its slot in the 2017 WRC calendar (October 5-8), the weather is unlikely to be much different, with bright sunshine expected to take the bite off the early morning chill. Rain is unlikely, but showers cannot be ruled out over the weekend which will see Europe switch to winter time.

In keeping with recent tradition, the Spanish round's competitive action will take place in the region near the Costa Daurada seaside resort of Salou, south of Barcelona. As the world championship's only mixed-surface round, the programme features a combination of gravel stages on Friday followed by two-days of asphalt competition. As a result, teams run two distinct versions of their respective cars whose ride height, suspension, etc. are changed overnight between Legs 1 and 2.

To cover the weekend's unique mix of conditions, Michelin's partners will be able to choose between two different tyre ranges, namely the H5 (hard compound) and S6 (soft) versions of the MICHELIN Pilot Sport for the asphalt stages, plus the MICHELIN LTX Force H4 (hard) and MICHELIN LTX Force M6 (medium) for the day on dirt.

Meanwhile, the French firm's WRC2 partners will have a choice between the RH3 (hard) and RS (soft) versions of the MICHELIN Pilot Sport asphalt tyre, and between the MICHELIN Latitude Cross H90 (hard) and S80 (soft) for gravel. In the case of exceptionally heavy rain on Saturday and/or Sunday, crews will be able to fit the MICHELIN Pilot Sport FW3 (FW = Full Wet) whose specific tread pattern, high 'sea-to-land' tread block ratio and oblique lateral grooves are designed to combine performance in the wet with resistance to aquaplaning.

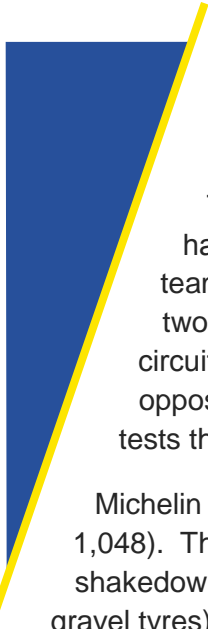
"The fact that Rally de España takes in such a variety of surfaces obviously makes it a very interesting event, especially this year because the Drivers' and Manufacturers' titles still haven't been settled with only two rounds remaining," says **Arnaud Rémy**, the manager of Michelin's rally programmes. "Tyre strategy promises to play a big role as crews seek to select the ideal options as a function of the weather and stage profiles. The expert advice provided by our technicians is likely to come into its own once again, especially as Friday's menu includes two visits to a stage of more than 40km in length that has a long asphalt section in the middle. I am confident, however, that our considerable experience of this rally will enable us to assist the performance of our partners."

Although the menu of this year's Rally de España features one less stage compared with 2017, the event is actually slightly longer, with a total distance of 1,495.73km, including 331.58km divided into 18 stages. Competitive action will begin with a short 3.2km super-special for spectators on Thursday evening in Barcelona's Montjuic district, starting on Avenida Reina Maria Cristina.



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This will be followed on Friday with two visits to a loop of three dirt stages, two of which haven't been used since 2014. After an extended service halt on Friday evening to give teams sufficient time to convert their cars from gravel- to asphalt-specification, crews face two complete days on asphalt when they will need to switch to a driving style more akin to circuit racing. Saturday's action will take them northwest of Salou, with two stages run in the opposite direction to 2017, while Sunday will feature Riudecanyes and Santa Marina, two tests that were run last October.

Michelin will have 2,008 tyres in Salou for the 2018 Rally de España (WRC: 960 / WRC2: 1,048). The WRC drivers will be allowed to use up to 30 tyres (WRC2: 28), not including shakedown, from a total allocation comprising 28 asphalt tyres and 24 gravel tyres (WRC2: 22 gravel tyres), plus eight rain tyres.

Michelin staff for the 2018 RallyRACC Catalunya – Rally de Espana

Michelin's partners will be backed by a total staff of 17:

- **Arnaud Rémy** (Rally Programme Manager)
- 4 team advisors
- 2 coordinators
- 8 fitters
- 2 press officers

