

2019 FIA World Rally Championship
Round 9/14: NESTE Rally Finland

The MICHELIN LTX Force M6 flies high in Finland

The 2019 Rally Finland was won by Ott Tänak and Martin Järveoja in their Michelin-equipped Toyota Yaris WRC. The Estonian pair finished clear of Finns Esapekka Lappi/Janne Ferm (2nd, Citroën C3 WRC) and Jari-Matti Latvala/Miikka Anttila (3rd, Toyota Yaris WRC) who made it an all-Michelin top three. These three crews emerged as the week's chief protagonists and the gaps amongst the front-runners remained small from start to finish.

Indeed, after the thirteenth of the event's 23 special stages, the top three was blanketed by just six-tenths of a second, an eloquent sign of their outstanding consistency and precision given that they no longer have knowledge of their rivals' split times.

Rallying has never been an exact science. Tenths of a second, and even whole seconds can be squandered in an instant but the WRC stars succeeded in pushing to the limit in Finland from first to the very last stage. In addition to the crews' perfectly set-up cars, their work during pre-event testing and their knowledge of the stages, Michelin played a key role in this exceptional performance package by providing tyres whose consistency and versatility the drivers knew they could count on.

The total length of the 2019 Rally Finland was 1,373.67 kilometres which included 307.58km divided into 23 stages, for which Michelin proposed a choice between the medium-compound MICHELIN LTX Force M6 and the harder LTX Force H4.

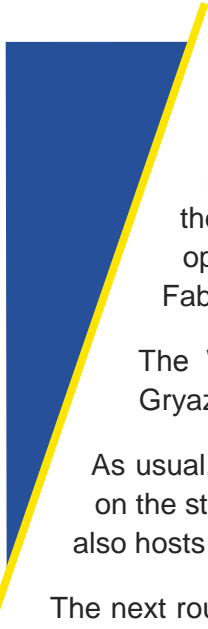
The cool temperatures for the time of year – which ranged from 6°C to a high of around 17°C in the afternoons – and the damp ground prompted crews to go essentially for the medium option which proved ideal for the conditions. Also, Finland's high-speed dirt roads are relatively unaggressive and the crews opted to carry just one spare for the different competitive loops, instead of the two authorised by the regulations. The weight saving of around 25kg (WRC tyres weigh approximately 15kg) was deemed particularly appreciable on the fastest fixture of the world championship.

“Along with the jumps and long, high-speed drifts that have always been a hallmark of Rally Finland, we were notably impressed by the small gaps we saw at the top of the leaderboard for more than half of the rally,” says **Arnaud Rémy**, the manager of Michelin's rally programmes. “These drivers are masters of their art and their lines are so precise. Such high performance naturally calls for quality tyres that are capable of soaking up all the different forces in play while delivering a degree of consistency that the drivers know they can rely on. Perhaps more than in any other form of motorsport, rally drivers need to feel perfectly at one with their car, and tyres play an important part in this process by providing them with accurate feedback.”



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There were fierce battles in the WRC2 Pro and WRC2 battles, too, where Michelin's partners could choose between the soft-compound MICHELIN Latitude Cross S80 and the harder Latitude Cross H90. Here again, the soft alternative proved the preferred option, although some drivers – including Finnish youngster Kalle Rovannerä (Skoda Fabia R5) – left service on Saturday afternoon with five MICHELIN Latitude Cross H90s.

The WRC2 Pro and WRC2 classes were won by Rovannerä/Halttunen and Russia's Gryazin/Fedorov respectively, both in Michelin-equipped Skoda Fabia R5s.

As usual, Rally Finland attracted big crowds from across Europe and the number of spectators on the stages was a sure sign that the WRC is as popular as ever in this part of the world which also hosts a round in Sweden.

The next round of the 2019 FIA World Rally Championship will take crews to Germany on August 22-25 for Rallye Deutschland where Michelin will provide its partners with its range of pure asphalt tyres.



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