

2018 FIA World Rally Championship
Round 2/14: Rally Sweden

Michelin's studded tyre range covers all the bases in mixed conditions

Once again, Rally Sweden lived up every bit to its promise, despite crews having to cope with a taxing blend of ice, snow and exposed gravel.

As usual, fans turned out in huge numbers and flocked to the event's famous spectator spots like 'Colin's Crest' where the cars take off and perform spectacular leaps of up to and more than forty metres.

To help them rise to the challenge posed by this year's Rally Sweden, Michelin provided its WRC partners with the MICHELIN X-Ice North 3 equipped with 384 studs to bite into the frozen ground. Meanwhile, its partners competing in the WRC2 Pro (for factory teams) and WRC2 (privateers) classes ran the MICHELIN X-Ice NA01, a brand new studded tyre designed specifically for championship's R5 cars.

"In the end, the conditions were better than we had been expecting," observed **Arnaud Rémy**, the manager of Michelin's rally programmes. "By that I mean they were colder and more typical than the forecasts had led us to believe. There were fewer portions of exposed dirt than some had been predicting, too. For sure, the coating of ice was quite thin at times but our studs stood up better than some drivers had anticipated through the more challenging portions. Indeed, thanks to the exclusive studding technique we employ [see below], our tyres hardly lost any studs at all and the lack of grip that was reported at times was due more to the presence of water and slush. We came away with a strong result in WRC2, as well, since we topped both the WRC2 and WRC2 Pro orders with the MICHELIN X-Ice North NA01. Our partners in these classes were pleased with our new tyre and we even noted smaller gaps to the WRC cars. We will definitely remember the 2019 Rally Sweden as a strong performance."

The second round of the 2019 FIA World Rally Championship was based at its traditional home near Torsby, around 100 kilometres north of Karlstad. The week's menu featured 19 stages totalling 319.17km and an overall distance of 1,466.63km through Sweden and Norway.


The event was won by Ott Tänak/Martin Järveoja (Toyota Yaris WRC), ahead of Esapekka Lappi/Janne Ferm (2nd, Citroën C3 WRC) and Thierry Neuville/Nicolas Gilsoul (3rd, Hyundai i20 Coupe WRC) who made it an all-MICHELIN X-Ice North 3 podium.

The WRC2 Pro and WRC2 classes were won respectively by Norwegians Mads Ostberg/Torstein Eriksen (Citroën C3 R5) and Ole-Christian Veiby/Jonas Andersson (Volkswagen Polo GTi R5) who provided the new MICHELIN X-Ice NA01 with an emphatic result out of the box.



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The next round of the 2019 FIA World Rally Championship will take teams to León, Mexico, on March 7-10 for the first gravel event of the season.

Studding technique

The X-Ice North 3 and X-Ice North NA01 tyres are not equipped with studs when they come out of the factory in Clermont-Ferrand, France. The task of actually inserting the studs into the covers is performed by Michelin's longstanding partner Däckproffsen in Växjö, Sweden. This entirely manual operation is divided into three phases: drilling of the tread blocks, placing glue in the resulting holes and inserting the studs. The 384 steel and tungsten tips fitted to each tyre are 20 millimetres in length but only 6.5 millimetres protrude from the tread (X-Ice North 3). It takes around 45 minutes to complete each tyre.



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