

2020 FIA World Rally Championship
Round 4: Rally Estonia

MICHELIN ready for action as the 2020 WRC campaign resumes with a new-look final run-in

After an interruption of practically five months since March's Rally Mexico which was itself shortened slightly as the Covid-19 pandemic took a grip, the 2020 FIA World Rally Championship fires back up this weekend in Estonia. Included for the first time as part of the WRC calendar, Rally Estonia did not feature on the initial 2020 schedule. However, tightening travel restrictions have led the series' organisers to focus on European venues and postpone the longer-haul fixtures until next season.

After the year's wintry openers, namely Rallye Monte-Carlo and Rally Sweden, Mexico was the first of the championship's initially-planned gravel events, which means Rally Estonia will be the second loose-surface round of the campaign.

Having emerged as the Baltic States' biggest motorsport event since it was first organised in 2010, the rally is reputed above all for its fast stages and jumps, yet it also includes a number of technical forest roads that range from narrow to wide.

The defending world champion Ott Tänak will obviously be keen to post a top performance on home soil in his Hyundai i20 Coupe WRC which is equipped with Michelin tyres, as are all the cars of the sport's stars who are eager to get behind the wheel in anger for the first time since mid-March.

For sanitary reasons, Rally Estonia will run to a compact format, with the weekend's 17 stages (11 on Saturday, September 5, plus six on Sunday) totalling just 232.64 kilometres. The pace is consequently likely to be fast and furious from the off.

Like the competitors, Michelin Motorsport's staff are looking forward to the return of competitive action, too, and there will be plenty to keep them busy in the course of this high-speed sprint. The terrain won't entirely be unknown for the drivers, however, since the majority of them have previously contested Rally Estonia as a non-WRC round as part of their build-up to Rally Finland.

"Rally Estonia may be new to WRC calendar but we already have good knowledge of the stages because the teams have tended to use it recently to prepare for Finland," notes **Arnaud Rémy**, the manager of Michelin's rally programmes. "Due to the current circumstances, the format will be shorter than we are accustomed to seeing at world championship level but we are still delighted to be back in the game after the difficult period we have been through these past months.

"The Estonian stages don't leave much margin for error, so grip performance and the feedback competitors get from their tyres are likely to play an important role and give the drivers the confidence they need to show winning commitment."



“We can’t be sure what the weather will be like, so – after consultation with the teams – the medium-compound MICHELIN LTX Force M6 has been named as the nominated tyre because of its versatility. The harder H4 will also be available, though, should the conditions turn out to be hot, an eventuality that can by no means be ruled out in this part of Europe at this time of year.”

Rally Estonia will run out of Tartu, the country’s second-biggest city, while starting-order rules have been revised as a one-off measure for the weekend. Indeed, the compact format means that 62 percent of all competitive action (11 stages) will take place on Saturday alone, but the championship’s provisional leader Sébastien Ogier (Toyota Gazoo Racing WRT) will only have to run first on the road for the first six tests. From Stage 7, the start order will be based on the reverse of the official classification as it stands after SS6.

Lastly, Rally Estonia will be the 600th WRC fixture since the championship’s creation in 1973.

The MICHELIN LTX Force M6 and MICHELIN LTX Force H4 (WRC runners)

Number of tyres available for Rally Estonia: 432

Drivers may use up to 20 tyres (including shakedown) from a total allocation of 16 M6s (medium compound) and 12 H4s (hard compound).

The MICHELIN LATITUDE Cross H90 and MICHELIN LATITUDE Cross M80 (WRC2 and WRC3 runners)

Number of tyres available for Rally Estonia: 224

Drivers may use up to 18 tyres (including shakedown) from a total allocation of 14 H90s (hard compound) and 12 M80s (medium compound).

Michelin’s staff for the 2020 Rally Estonia

Michelin will have a total staff of 12 in Estonia:

- Arnaud Rémy (Rally Programme Manager, Michelin Motorsport)^[1]_{SEP}
- 3 team advisors ^[1]_{SEP}
- 2 coordinators ^[1]_{SEP}
- 6 fitters

