

2019 FIA World Rally Championship
Round 7/14: VODAFONE Rally de Portugal

The MICHELIN LTX Force M6 and H4 kick off WRC's long European leg with northern Portugal's challenging stages

With the year's South American rounds now behind them, the 2019 FIA World Rally Championship's players return to Europe for a sequence of seven rallies, ahead of the mid-November finale in Australia.

The seventh of the season's 14 rounds, and followed by Sardinia in June and late-July's Rally Finland, the Rally de Portugal is the first of three consecutive, very different gravel events and is described as one of the roughest of the year.

Although it has not always featured on the WRC calendar, the Rally de Portugal emerged as a regular fixture when the championship was created in 1973. It was dropped in 2001, however, but was reinstated in 2007 when a new-look rally was organised in the country's Algarve region, before moving to its current home in Porto in 2015.

This year again, the service park is based in Matosinhos, to the north of Portugal's second-biggest city, while the week's mouth-watering programme begins with an official send-off in mediaeval Coimbra, situated mid-distance between Porto and Lisbon.

Friday's competitive action comprises two loops of three stages near Arganil, north of Coimbra, then heads north to Lousada for a short spectator stage that cars will tackle two at a time.

Saturday's run promises to be harder for the crews, with more than half of the weekend's total competitive distance (165km, out of 306.97km divided into 18 special stages) packed into two loops of three stages to the east of Matosinhos.

The competition concludes on Sunday with five stages near Fafe, including two attempts at the two spectacular jumps on the stage of the same name.

The common denominator shared by all these stages - some of which are entirely new - is their surface which tends to cut up for the afternoon's passes when drivers have to contend with exposed rocks. To help them rise to this challenge, Michelin's WRC partners will have a choice between two types of tyre:

- The **MICHELIN LTX Force H4**, a robust, hard-compound option intended notably for the afternoon's loops when the stages are likely to be more rutted than they were for the morning's visits.

- The medium-compound **MICHELIN LTX Force M6**, for extra grip on the predominantly sandy ground faced first time through, although drivers are naturally free to choose between the H4 and M6 versions as they wish.



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Michelin's WRC2 runners will be able to choose between the hard-compound **MICHELIN Latitude Cross H90** and the softer **MICHELIN Latitude Cross S80**.

*"The Rally de Portugal is a world championship classic and kicks off a long run of European WRC rounds," says **Arnaud Rémy**, the manager of Michelin's rally programmes. "It is always a demanding event as far as tyres go, since the stage surfaces evolve considerably from one year to the next, making it hard to use the data we have from previous seasons. This year again we expect to see big differences in grip between the first attempts at the predominantly sandy tests and the second visits which feature more abrasive, rocky and rutted ground. The show is sure to attract thousands of spectators and we have confidence in our tyres which have already showcased their all-round qualities on the gravel rounds we have contested so far this season."*

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

Number of tyres available for the Rally de Portugal: **496**

Drivers are authorised use up to 28 tyres (including shakedown) from a total allocation of 28 M6s (medium compound) and 16 H4s (hard compound).

The MICHELIN LATITUDE Cross H90 and MICHELIN LATITUDE Cross S80 (WRC2 runners)

Number of tyres available for the Rally de Portugal: **696**

Drivers are authorised to use up to 26 tyres (including shakedown) from a total allocation of 26 S80s (soft compound) and 16 H90s (hard compound).

Michelin's staff for the 2019 VODAFONE Rally de Portugal

Michelin will have a staff of 14 in Portugal:

- **Arnaud Rémy** (manager of Michelin's rally programmes)
- 2 coordinators
- 4 technical team advisors (CTEs)
- 6 fitters
- 1 Press officer



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