

2018 FIA World Rally Championship (WRC)
Round 5: YPF Rally Argentina

The MICHELIN LTX Force tyres back on Argentina's tracks

Rally Argentina kicks off a sequence of four very different gravel fixtures which will continue with visits to Portugal, Sardinia and Finland. This year's event features 18 stages totalling 358.25 competitive kilometres and a total distance of 1,300.65km. Villa Carlos Paz (700km northwest of Buenos Aires) which will once again host the service park and the usual high number of fans is expected to turn out to admire the sport's top cars and drivers.

The opening day will take crews to the Santa Rosa de Calamuchita region where the day's menu includes the long 'Amboy/Yacanto' (33.58km) test which returns to the programme after a four-year absence. Saturday's action will keep to its traditional format, although the classic long Los Gigantes test has been divided into two parts this year.

Sunday's itinerary will visit the rocky roads and lunar landscapes of the Traslasierra mountains, with two attempts at two of world class rallying most awesome stages – El Condor and Giulio Cesare – which are being run in the opposite direction compared with recent years. The climb to El Condor will serve as the weekend's Power Stage.

To take on Rally Argentina's notoriously tough roads, the WRC drivers will be able to choose between the hard-compound (H4) and soft-compound (S5) versions of the MICHELIN LTX Force. In 2017, the S5 was the preferred choice for 90 percent of the distance after the teams were won over by its impressive versatility, fast warm-up performance, consistency and superior longevity. Depending on the weather, crews might be attempted to fit the H4 alternative if the conditions turn out to be hot and rough.

"We prepared for Rally Argentina with tests in Portugal and Sardinia with our partners and the results were very encouraging," notes **Jacques Morelli**, the manager of Michelin FIA World Rally Championship programme. "The ground you find in Argentina is different, however. It tends to be sandier with a hard-packed base which makes grip harder to find. It is probably the WRC round where grip depends the most on the stiffness of the tyre's casing, but the regulations mean we have to take the same specification tyres to Argentina and Wales, so we need to work on finding the best compromise to ensure that we provide our partners with the best performance and safety whatever the conditions. Rally Argentina is an event where the gaps that open up on Friday's leg are difficult to recover on the last two days. Those drivers who succeed in coping the best with the issue of 'road sweeping' frequently find themselves in a strong position for the rest of the rally."

Michelin's WRC2 runners will be able to choose between the S80 (soft) and H90 (hard) versions of the MICHELIN Latitude Cross.

This year's entry list features 12 WRC crews and 10 WRC2 crews.



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The MICHELIN LTX Force S5 and H4 (WRC crews)

Number of tyres available in Argentina: **620**

Allocation per WRC driver: 24 tyres (plus four for shakedown) from a total allocation of 24 softs and 16 hards

The MICHELIN LATITUDE Cross H90 and S80 (WRC2 crews)

Number of tyres available in Argentina: **420**

Allocation per WRC2 driver: 22 tyres (plus four for shakedown) from a total allocation of 22 hards and 16 softs

Michelin staff for the YPF Rally Argentina 2018

Michelin's partners at the YPF Rally Argentina will be backed by a total staff of 13:

- **Jacques Morelli** and **Arnaud Rémy**, FIA WRC Programme Managers
- 4 Team Advisors
- 2 coordinators
- 4 fitters
- 1 press officer



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