

*2018 FIA World Rally Championship  
Round 8: Neste Rally Finland*

***A successful maiden outing for the new MICHELIN LTX  
Force S6 and MICHELIN LTX Force M6***

Michelin chose the fastest round of the 2018 FIA World Rally Championship to launch its latest range of WRC gravel tyres. For the first time since 2011, the French firm's partners were able to select two compounds from a choice of three options, namely the existing H4 (hard compound) version of the MICHELIN LTX Force, along with the new S6 (soft) and M6 (medium) variants.

The 2018 Neste Rally Finland, which is notorious for its soft ground and high speeds, was consequently a landmark event inasmuch as the company's WRC partners were able to fit either the MICHELIN LTX Force S6 or the LTX Force M6. Meanwhile, its WRC2 crews lined up to continue the successful run the tyre manufacturer has enjoyed in the this since the beginning of the season with a choice between the MICHELIN Latitude Cross S80 (soft) and MICHELIN Latitude Cross H90 (hard).

This year's Rally Finland route incorporated numerous changes, with two-thirds of the stage distance that was different compared with 2017 and 40 percent that had either never been visited previously or else was completely new for the current-generation drivers. The event itself was again based in Jyväskylä (around 300km north of the country's capital Helsinki) and featured a menu of three loops comprising 23 forest stages and a total competitive distance of 317.26 kilometres out of an overall distance of 1,427.49 kilometres.

"The new MICHELIN LTX Force S6 and MICHELIN LTX Force M6 were successful out of the box," reports **Arnaud Rémy**, the manager of Michelin's programmes. "The pre-Rally Finland testing we carried out with our partners suggested that these two new compounds would be strong and that initial impression was confirmed on the rally itself. Given the weather and the fact that, in the end, conditions stayed dry from start to finish, competitors predominantly opted for the M6 version of the LTX Force which was widely praised for its versatility. Wear rates varied as a function of the different cars and driving styles but the performance it delivered was extremely high and that's especially remarkable given how hot the weekend proved."


The 2018 Neste Rally Finland was won by Ott Tänak and Martin Jarveoja (Toyota Yaris WRC), ahead of Mads Ostberg/Torstein Eriksen (Citroën C3 WRC) and Jari-Matti Latvala/Miikka Anttila (Toyota Yaris WRC), all of whom competed on the latest MICHELIN LTX Force tyres.

In WRC2, the retirements of Rovannerä and Veiby handed the class win to Finns Pietarinen/Raitanen (Skoda Fabia R5) who currently top the Finnish Rally Championship. They were joined on the podium by fellow Finns Huttunen/Linnaketto (Hyundai i20 R5) and Britons Greensmith/Parry (Ford Fiesta R5) who ran both the soft-compound MICHELIN LTX Force S80 and the harder H90.



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The next round of the 2018 World Rally Championship will take teams to Germany's Trier region for the all-asphalt Rallye Deutschland on August 16-19.



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