

2016 FIA World Rally Championship (WRC)

Rally Italia Sardegna

MICHELIN tyres showcase their strength in Sardinia

Rally Italia Sardegna's extremely slippery, rough and rutted stages are notoriously challenging for tyres, but the weekend saw the MICHELIN LTX Force H4 and S4, as well as the MICHELIN Latitude Cross H90 and S80 (WRC2), provide yet another demonstration of their superiority at the WRC's sharp end.

In the course of a single World Rally Championship campaign, competitors face two basic types of surface, namely asphalt (occasionally covered by snow or ice on the Rallye Monte-Carlo) and gravel (covered by snow or ice in Sweden). When you look at the calendar in greater detail, however, it is clear that there is a wide variety of types of gravel which, combined with the prevailing weather and stage profiles, can make the drivers' work particularly complex and challenging.

"The weekend's 19 stages in the north of Sardinia were narrow and covered in a top-coating of sand and dust. They are undoubtedly the roughest of season's eight gravel rounds, nine if you count Spain," says **Jacques Morelli**, manager of Michelin's World Rally Championship programme. "Because of the punishing conditions and hot weather, the hard-compound MICHELIN LTX Force H4 is the nominated tyre for this event but some crews didn't hesitate to fit the softer LTX Force S4 in order to benefit from better grip on the slippery stages which were covered with fine sand that even found its way into the cars! The MICHELIN LTX Force was designed to cover a very wide spectrum of sometimes extreme conditions, ranging from temperatures of up 30°C in Sardinia to 15°C and mud in Wales. Yet their outstanding versatility means competitors benefit from a high level of performance, longevity and safety throughout the year."

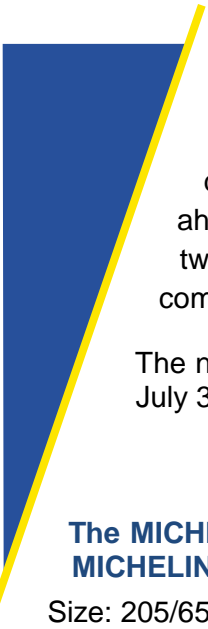
The FIA regulations authorise just one type of gravel tyre for the season, available in a choice of hard and soft compounds. Michelin's engineers have found the compromise that allows drivers to benefit from high performance whatever the weather or type of surface. In addition to traction and cornering grip, strength is also vital because most stages are repeated and the first visits often unearth buried rocks or cause deep ruts to form, but that hasn't prevented Michelin's WRC gravel tyre from boasting an exceptional record!

The overall 2016 Rally Italia Sardegna win ended up in the hands of Thierry Neuville / Nicolas Gilsoul (Hyundai i20 WRC), ahead of Volkswagen Polo R WRC crews Jari-Matti Latvala / Miikka Anttila and Sébastien Ogier/Julien Ingrassia. All three cars used a combination of MICHELIN LTX Force H4 and S4 tyres.



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In WRC2, the robustness of the MICHELIN Latitude Cross H90 and S80 made a real difference, too, helping Teemu Suninen / Mikko Markkula (Skoda Fabia R5) to victory, ahead of fellow Skoda runners Jan Kopecky and Pavel Dresler who made it another one-two for Michelin in the WRC2 class in which there is fierce competition between tyre companies.

The next round of the FIA World Rally Championship will take teams to Poland on June 30-July 3.

The MICHELIN LTX Force H4, MICHELIN LTX Force S4, MICHELIN Latitude Cross H90 and MICHELIN Latitude Cross S80

Size: 205/65R15 (17/65-15)

Width: 205 mm

Sidewall height: 133 mm

Interior diameter: 15 inches

Tread pattern: asymmetric and directional (i.e. a left-hand side and a right-hand side tyre)

Surface: non-sealed surfaces

Use of the H4 and H90: aggressive, hard-wearing surfaces – dry ground – temperature: >15°C

Use of the S4 and S80: wet or damp dirt – temperature: <15°C



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