



FIA World Rally Championship 2016
Rally Sweden – Second race

Studded MICHELIN X-Ice North 3 tyres ensure gripping action in Sweden

Following last week's concerns due to a dearth of snow and ice on most of the stages route due to abnormally mild weather, this year's Sweden Rally finally went ahead as planned, although significantly shortened.

The original menu of 21 stages was initially slashed to 13 and, in the end, only 12 tests actually took place following the subsequent cancellation of Sunday's SS20. That left 226 of the originally planned 332 competitive kilometres.

Despite a lack of the event's hallmark snow walls, on which the drivers often lean through corners, it turned out to be a spectacular rally, with the top cars reaching speeds of up to 190kph along icy tree-lined forest lanes.

Fearing that the tyres' studs might not survive the expected long distances on clear asphalt and thawing dirt, the organisers decided to add four extra covers to the crews' original tyre quotas, but the MICHELIN X-Ice North 3 – a solution developed especially for Rally Sweden – delivered consistent, robust performance throughout.

Said **Jacques Morelli**, manager of Michelin's World Rally Championship programme: *"The MICHELIN X-Ice North 3 was undoubtedly the ideal tyre for the specific conditions encountered during the 2016 Rally Sweden. Beyond the fact that the FIA WRC regulations specify the use of studded tyres for this event, no other type of tyre would have been up to the job these past few days. There were effectively many portions of unfrozen dirt and the first cars through the stages tended to cut up the surface, so the studs – which protrude 6.5mm from the tread blocks – did tend to suffer. Even so, when the cars came back from the first stages, which were mostly frozen, we were able to note that not many studs had been lost. It was the same on Saturday when there was some snow on the ground. The MICHELIN X-Ice North 3 accomplished its mission to the letter by providing maximum grip on all the different types of surface and they didn't even suffer any significant damage when the going was less suited to the job for which they were designed."*

A unique studding process

The MICHELIN X-Ice North 3 is capable of combining such a high level of performance and robustness thanks to Michelin's 30-year association with its exclusive competition tyre distributor in Sweden. The latter specialises in studding winter tyres and has developed a technique that does away with the need for special moulds, thereby permitting additional latitude for development. Michelin sends its tyres to Sweden to have the studs inserted a number of months ahead of the rally.

For the 2016 Rally Sweden, 1,200 MICHELIN X-Ice North 3 were sent from Michelin's factory in Clermont-Ferrand, France, for testing purposes and for the event itself on which 1,100 covers were available. The studding process involves one person drilling 384 carefully calibrated holes into the tread blocks of each tyre, before another squeezes in a special glue, the formula of which is kept secret. A third person inserts the studs.

Studding a single tyre takes 45 minutes, so 900 hours of work were required to prepare the 1,200 tyres for the 2016 Rally Sweden. In total, 460,800 steel and tungsten studs were fitted.



MEDIA INFORMATION
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All-Michelin podiums in WRC and WRC 2!

Helped by their Michelin tyres, Sébastien Ogier and Julien Ingrassia overcame the challenging conditions in their Volkswagen Polo R WRC to win the 2016 Sweden Rally. Hayden Paddon/John Kennard (2nd, Hyundai i20 WRC) and Mads Ostberg/Ola Floene (3rd, Ford Fiesta WRC) made it an all-Michelin podium.

In the WRC2 battle, where there is also fierce competition between tyre manufacturers, Elfyn Evans/Craig Parry (Ford Fiesta R5) led another all-Michelin one-two-three finish, chased by Skoda Fabia R5 crews Pontus Tidemand/Jonas Andersson and Esapekka Lappi/Jann Ferm. The latter clinched third place on the final stage.

The next round of the 2016 FIA World Rally Championship will take crews to Leon, Mexico, for Rally Mexico on March 3-6.