



**2016 FIA World Rally Championship (WRC)  
Round 1: Rallye Monte-Carlo**

## **Michelin tyres play key role in 2016 Rallye Monte-Carlo outcome**

The opening round of the 2016 WRC provided competitors with a broad variety of stage profiles and surface conditions which meant that having the right tyre on the car at the right moment was as crucial as it always is on the uniquely challenging Rallye Monte-Carlo.

With a total route length of 1,474.34km, including 16 stages totalling almost 375km, the winter event is one of the longest rounds of the season, while the numerous, unpredictable pitfalls make it particularly tricky for the crews who need to call on every bit of their experience to reach the finish unscathed. To help them, Michelin provides its partners with competitive tyres and a valuable technical support service. The versatility of the Michelin tyres that were available this year – two basic types, each available in two variants – allowed the crews to take full advantage of their allocations for the week and benefit from a performance edge compared with the competition.

### **Saturday morning: Andreas Mikkelsen proves a point**

It was incontestably Saturday's action that was the hardest for competitors who faced two attempts at a loop comprising two stages – SS9/11 (51.55km) and SS10/12 (17.13km) – followed by a fifth test (SS13, 36.6km) on the run back south to Monaco.

While the exceptionally long SS9/11 was predominantly dry and clear, SS10/12 featured long stretches of lingering snow and ice which made tyre choices for the two loops extremely complex.

For the morning's visit, Andreas Mikkelsen/Jaeger Synnevag (Volkswagen Polo R WRC) spotted the best option and this helped them to lay the foundations for their second place at the finish.

While the majority of their opponents selected four 'super-soft' MICHELIN Pilot Sport SS5s, with two non-studded PA4 snow tyres in the boot, the Volkswagen pair left service with four studded MICHELIN Pilot Alpin PA4 CLs on their car, plus two PA4s as spares.

Unsurprisingly, they dropped time on SS9 but they went on to beat the rest of the field in emphatic fashion on the following test to illustrate, once again, how having the right tyres can be a genuine game-changer on the Monte. The Norwegians won SS10 by margins of 49.3s and 54.2s respectively over team-mates Sébastien Ogier/Julien Ingrassia (VW Polo R WRC) and Neuville/Gilsoul with whom they were battling hard for position. Taking the entire loop into account (SS9 + SS10) Mikkelsen/Jaeger extended their lead over the Hyundai crew by 17.7 seconds.

### **The MICHELIN Pilot Sport SS5: the other star of the snow!**

The Rallye Monte-Carlo was the first competitive outing for the 'super-soft' SS5 version of the MICHELIN Pilot Sport. This new tyre, which was acclaimed by the drivers, features the same construction as the 'soft' MICHELIN Pilot Sport (S5) and was the predominant choice for the 2016 WRC's opener.

"The new MICHELIN Pilot Sport SS5 fulfilled its mission to the letter," noted **Jacques Morelli**, manager of Michelin's FIA WRC programme. "Given the low temperatures we saw during the event, especially at higher altitudes, it was frequently chosen by the crews who were pleased with its longevity and the consistency of the performance it delivered, even over the longest stages, like SS9/11 Lardier et Valença-Faye which was 51.55km in length."



The variety of the Rallye Monte-Carlo stages also provided Michelin with the opportunity to showcase the exceptionally versatility of its range, even though there were only two basic choices of tyre and three different compounds.

The event was ultimately won by Sébastien Ogier/Julien Ingrassia (Volkswagen Polo R WRC), ahead of Andreas Mikkelsen/Jaeger Synnevag and Thierry Neuville/Nicolas Gilsoul (Hyundai i20 WRC) who made it an all-Michelin podium. The French firm also finished on top in WRC2 thanks to Elfyn Evans and his new co-driver Craig Parry (Ford Fiesta R5).

### **A reminder of the Michelin tyres available for the 2016 Rallye Monte-Carlo**

#### **Dry and wet conditions:**

**The MICHELIN Pilot Sport S5** ('S' for 'soft' compound) is designed for use on dry roads at temperatures below 15°C, as well as in wet conditions. First seen on last August's Rallye Deutschland, the new MICHELIN Pilot Sport H5 (hard compound, not available for the Rallye Monte-Carlo) and S5 were developed with the year's toughest asphalt events like the Tour de Corse and Rallye Monte-Carlo in mind. They mark a big step compared with the former H4 and S4 versions of the Pilot Sport and stand out visually through their more uniform tread pattern which features more evenly sized and shaped tread blocks. Changes to their construction and the materials employed for their tread compound also contribute to their enhanced performance on wet and dry stages alike.

**The MICHELIN Pilot Sport SS5** ('SS' for 'super soft' compound). This tyre is particularly suited to low temperatures of around or below 0°C, as well as to frosty ground. It features a softer compound but its construction is identical to that of the MICHELIN Pilot Sport S5. The results of testing showed that the SS5 can be worth a gain of up to seven seconds per kilometre over the S5 version in very cold conditions.

Size of the MICHELIN Pilot Sport S5 and SS5: 235/40R18 (20/65-18).

#### **Snow:**

**-The MICHELIN Pilot Alpin PA4** is a perfect illustration of Michelin's practice of carrying over technology from motorsport to road cars. It has a solid competition pedigree but was developed at the same time as the equivalent road tyre by a team of development specialists working out of Michelin Motorsport and Michelin's Technology Centre in Ladoux, near Clermont-Ferrand, France.

In order to cope with the constraints associated with topflight rallying, the construction of the WRC version is more robust than that of the road tyre but parallels between the two include the design of the tread pattern and the materials they employ. The MICHELIN Pilot Alpin PA4 is an eloquent example of how the technology used in motorsport can be of benefit to mass-produced road tyres.

#### **Ice:**

##### **-The MICHELIN Pilot Alpin PA4 CL**

Fitted with 200 metal studs which protrude two millimetres from the tread block, the MICHELIN Pilot Alpin PA4 CL is designed for icy conditions. The studs, which weigh less than two grams each and which are short in order to protect road surfaces, are inserted using a Michelin-patented process.

Size of the MICHELIN Pilot Alpin PA4 and PA4 CL: 215/45R18 (18/65-18).



## **Michelin's Technical Team Advisors: key players**

The knowhow of Michelin's Technical Team Advisors plays a fundamental part during the WRC season whenever shifting conditions or unexpected situations result in complex tyre choices, whatever the event. During the Rallye Monte-Carlo, their recommendations can be even more crucial, although the drivers always have the final word.

## **Michelin at the 2016 Rallye Monte-Carlo**

Michelin took 1,720 tyres to the 2016 Rallye Monte-Carlo (900 for WRC drivers, 820 for WRC2 drivers).

Michelin had a total staff of 27 at the event:

**Pascal Couasnon**, Director, Michelin Motorsport

**Nicolas Goubert**, Technical Director and Deputy Director, Michelin Motorsport

**Olivier Vialle**, Marketing Director, Michelin Motorsport

**Jacques Morelli**, Rally Programmes Manager, Michelin Motorsport

Five Research and Development specialists

Four Technical Team Advisors

Two coordinators

10 fitters

Two press officers