



2014 FIA World Rally Championship (WRC)
Rallye de France-Alsace (October 3-5, 2014)

The FIA WRC drivers analyse the debut of the new MICHELIN Pilot Sport H4 and S4 tyres

The 2014 Rallye de France-Alsace was won by Jari-Matti LATVALA and Mikka ANTTILA who claimed their maiden sealed-surface WRC success after facing a variety of weather conditions, ranging from dry and sunny on Friday, to damp on Saturday afternoon and misty on Sunday morning. The Finns' Volkswagen Polo R WRC completed the French round ahead of the sister car of Andreas MIKKELSEN / Ola FLOENE and the Citroën DS3 WRC of Kris MEEKE / Paul NAGLE. The 2013 world champion Sébastien OGIER, who stood a chance of sewing up this year's crown on home soil, was delayed by problems on Day 1. The suspense in the title fight will consequently continue until at least the championship's next round.

On the technical front, the chief new feature of the weekend was the debut appearance of the latest MICHELIN Pilot Sport H4 and S4 asphalt WRC tyres which mark a clear improvement over their predecessors on damp ground, with no detriment to either their dry-weather performance, or their durability compared with the former H2 and S2 versions of the MICHELIN Pilot Sport.

The MICHELIN Pilot Sport H4 and S4 were developed for use by the WRC drivers who provided their analysis of the new tyres' performance after the rally...

The drivers' analysis ...

Jari-Matti LATVALA, winner of the 2014 Rallye de France-Alsace, talks about the new MICHELIN Pilot Sport H4 and S4: "The feeling is very different and I had to adapt. Globally, though, I think the new tyres are competitive, especially in damp and wet conditions and stage times were effectively down compared with the former tyres. In the dry, I had to adapt my driving style because the car seemed to 'move' more under hard cornering."

Citroën Racing's **Mads OSTBERG** and **Kris MEEKE** expressed near-identical opinions: "When Michelin brought out these new tyres, Citroën Total Abu Dhabi WRT's engineers set to work at once to find the ideal set-up for the DS3 WRC. It didn't take them very long. The new tyres provide better grip on the wet and stage times have come down significantly. We were also faster in the dry, so these new tyres are definitely a success."

Said **Mikko HIRVONEN** (M-Sport): "These tyres are suited to the Nordic way of driving. You can feel the body 'move' more, but I am comfortable with that."

The opinion of Hyundai Motorsport's **Dani SORDO** evolved in the course of the rally: "It took us a while to adapt the set-up of the Hyundai i20 WRC to these new Michelin tyres. The initial feeling wasn't positive. I had trouble adapting to begin with because they 'moved' more than the previous tyres. I was also concerned about the H4's ability to resist wear. As the rally progressed, though, I started to understand how the new tyres worked and I also realised that their wear was very even. After that, I was able to up my pace gradually and my times began to improve."

The next outing for the MICHELIN Pilot Sport H4 and S4 will be the Salou-based RallyRACC - Rally de Espana on October 23-26.