

2014 FIA World Rally Championship
Rallye de France-Alsace

Enhanced safety and performance in wet conditions thanks to the new MICHELIN Pilot Sport H4 and S4

After September's Coates Hire Rally Australia, where Volkswagen Motorsport sewed up the 2014 Manufacturers' world title, the World Rally Championship (WRC) moves on to Strasbourg in France's Alsace region, on October 2-5.

The Rallye de France-Alsace has visited asphalt stages in the Vosges Mountains and Alsatian vineyards since 2010 and features a variety of surface types, ranging from sections where damp portions can linger under tree cover, to faster, wider portions, not to mention the lanes which crisscross the local vineyards that can be slippery in places because of loose gravel. The challenge is more complex still in the sort of wet weather that often sweeps over the region at this time of year.

Michelin has consequently designed two new tyres, namely the H4 and S4 versions of the MICHELIN Pilot Sport which deliver enhanced safety with no detriment to their performance in wet or damp conditions.

These new tyres supersede the former MICHELIN Pilot Sport H2 and S2 which concluded their unbeaten career on the Rallye Deutschland in August. The new solutions pack extensive changes to both their technical specification and appearance. **In addition to a different construction, they feature a new tread pattern derived from the new ultra-high performance MICHELIN Pilot Sport Cup 2 road tyre, as well as new compounds.** The latest solutions promise considerably higher grip on wet asphalt with no fall-off to either dry-weather performance or durability.

The MICHELIN Pilot Sport H4 and S4 also represent a **weight-saving of approximately two kilograms per set of four tyres** compared with their predecessors.

Like all high-end Michelin tyres, and more especially the new Pilot Sport Cup 2, the Pilot Sport H4 and S4 feature Velvet Technology™, a technique which produces a velvet-like texture on the sidewalls thanks to contrasting surface finishes.

Jacques MORELLI, manager of Michelin's FIA WRC programme, explains the reasoning behind the French firm's decision to introduce new tyres in Alsace: "Since 2011, the FIA WRC regulations have dictated the use of just one type of tyre for all weather conditions. That said, two versions are allowed: a soft compound (S) and a hard compound (H), although these may only differ through the compound employed for the tread.

"Michelin has developed a new asphalt tyre in order to enhance safety in wet conditions, even in the case of standing water. "To achieve this, we began by reviewing the tread pattern which features additional grooving since it is closer to that of the MICHELIN Pilot Sport Cup 2 designed for supersport cars. At the same time, we designed a new construction which incorporates new materials. Indeed, it is impossible to act on a single parameter without taking the others into account at the same time. If you do that, you run the risk of obtaining a gain in one area while penalising others. Thanks to the MICHELIN Total Performance strategy which is employed by all the company's development teams, Michelin successfully takes all the different parameters forward concurrently, and this was the case with the new MICHELIN Pilot Sport H4 and S4."

In addition to the new tyres that drivers will have for the 2014 Rallye de France-Alsace, Michelin will also have the MICHELIN Pilot Sport FW (Full Wet) on hand for extremely wet weather if required.



The exact numbers of each type of tyre available per driver are:

- MICHELIN Pilots Sport H4: 24
- MICHELIN Pilot Sport S4: 16
- MICHELIN Pilot Sport FW: 8

Each driver may use up to **20 tyres for the rally, plus four for shakedown.**

The total number of Michelin tyres available for the event is **1,950.**

MICHELIN Motorsport will have a total staff of 16 in Alsace for the Rallye de France:

- 1 FIA WRC programme manager
- 4 team advisors
- 2 coordinators
- 9 fitters

Senior MICHELIN Motorsport management will also attend the event, plus two press officers.

Michelin and the FFSA (Fédération Française du Sport Automobile) will also repeat the system of free shuttle services between stages during the 2014 Rallye de France-Alsace.