

2014 FIA World Rally Championship
Neste Oil Rally Finland

Debut show of force for the new MICHELIN LTX Force **A thrilling spectacle in the WRC1 class and victory in WRC2**

The new MICHELIN Motorsport-developed MICHELIN LTX Force gravel tyre made its competitive debut on the 2014 Rally Finland. Private testing with MICHELIN's partner teams ahead of the event provided a pointer to its potential and the latter was confirmed on the event's notoriously challenging stages.

During the development of this new tyre, the aim of MICHELIN Motorsport's engineers was to maintain the high level of strength of the MICHELIN LATITUDE Cross, which made its final appearance on late-June's Rally Poland, while at the same time delivering enhanced consistency and more even wear across the tread to ensure lasting performance over long competitive sections.

"Rally Finland confirmed that this ambitious objective has been met," observed Jacques MORELLI, the manager of Michelin's rally programmes. **"On the event's longer stages, the times were 0.5s/km faster on the first passes and 0.3s/km quicker on the second visits, when the conditions were cleaner.** We were especially able to evaluate the new tyre's benefit on 'Jukojärvi' (SS15/20) and 'Surkee' (SS16/21) which were identical to the stages used in 2013."

This gain was achieved thanks to two chief technological evolutions:

1) **Construction.** Modifications to the new tyre's shoulders favour a more even spread of the load across a bigger contact patch. This new construction retards both abrasion and damage to the tread's outer blocks.

2) **New compound.** The new compound used for the tread of the 'soft' S4 version of the MICHELIN LTX Force – which was the version used throughout the 2014 Rally Finland – is more resistant to the phenomenon of heat build-up.

In addition to the improved stage times, the progress made in terms of more even wear was apparent to the naked eye. When the cars' arrived at the service park in Jyväskylä after the different competitive loops, the outer part of the their tyre treads featured even wear, despite the fierce fight at the sharp end of the leaderboard which forced the drivers to push to the limit until the very end of the rally.

Jacques, MORELLI: "The 2014 Neste Oil Rally Finland will be remembered as a classic. It provided thrilling entertainment from start to finish with some memorable battles up and down the order. It was consequently the ideal litmus test for the MICHELIN LTX Force which contributed to the quality of the show by delivering a performance package of an even higher level than that of its predecessor."

The MICHELIN LTX Force sets a new performance benchmark for gravel rally tyres. "We are now eager to evaluate the two other new tyres we presented last week in competitive conditions, namely the MICHELIN Pilot Sport (asphalt) and the Pilot Sport FW (heavy rain) which will make their respective world championship debuts in three weeks' time in Germany and on the Rallye de France-Alsace, at the beginning of October," concludes Jacques MORELLI.

The 2014 Rally Finland was won by Finns Jari-Matti LATVALA and Miikka ANTTILA (VOLKSWAGEN POLO R WRC) who led from the start and shrugged off non-stop pressure from the defending world champions Sébastien OGIER / Julien INGRASSIA (2nd, VOLKSWAGEN POLO

R WRC) and from Kris MEEKE / Paul NAGLE (3rd, CITROEN DS3 WRC).

Meanwhile, Michelin runner Karl KRUUDA, 21, and his co-driver Martin JARVEOJA (FORD Fiesta S2000) came out on top in the WRC2 battle against specialists of this sort of terrain competing on a rival brand of tyres.

Last but not least, Michelin was pleased with the performance of its new TZS 81 tyre (17/65-15) which was developed especially for the R3 cars competing in the JWRC.

For round eight of the 2014 FIA World Rally Championship, MICHELIN's presence consisted of:

- Total number of tyres fitted for Rally Finland: 900 of the 1,360 tyres transported to Jyväskylä (including 260 for the JWRC competitors).
- Total number of MICHELIN Motorsport staff in attendance in Finland:
 - Pascal COUASON, MICHELIN Motorsport Director
 - Jacques MORELLI, manager of MICHELIN's rally programmes
 - 3 technical team advisers
 - 10 fitters
 - 2 press officers

The MICHELIN LTX Force tyres for the FIA WRC

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

Width: 205mm

Sidewall height: 133mm

Diameter: 15 inches

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

Weight: 16.4kg

Use: non-sealed surfaces

MICHELIN LTX Force 'H4': hard-wearing, aggressive surfaces, dry conditions, temperatures over 15°C

MICHELIN LTX Force 'S4': smooth gravel, wet or damp, temperatures up to 15° C

MICHELIN LTX Force 'H4': Mexico, Portugal, Italy, Australia and Spain

MICHELIN LTX Force 'S4': Argentina, Poland, Finland and Great Britain

The next round of the FIA World Rally Championship is Rallye Deutschland (August 21-24, 2014).