



## RALLY MEXICO 2014 FIA World Rally Championship

### The MICHELIN LATITUDE Cross H2 takes Mexico pitfalls in its stride Victory for Michelin in the RC2 class with its only partner, Yuri PROTASOV

#### 2014 Rally Mexico: exceptionally demanding conditions

One of the main new features of Rally Mexico's 11<sup>th</sup> edition was the extremely slippery nature of its stages. Recent dry weather meant that the hard-packed gravel tracks in this part of Mexico were covered in a top-coating of loose sand, which meant that the drivers had to adapt their driving styles accordingly. At the same time, the tyres were put through a punishing ordeal and were subjected to more and bigger knocks than usual. The MICHELIN LATITUDE Cross H2 stood up to the test perfectly, however. While its open tread pattern cleared the loose top surface to deliver the necessary grip, its strong sidewalls shrugged off the countless impacts with rocks and stones. For example, Mikko HIRVONEN swiped a rock on SS2 ('Los Mexicanos 1') and the knock was sufficiently big to damage the rear-right rim of his FORD Fiesta RS WRC. Yet the tyre did not lose air and the Finn was able to cover more than 60 kilometres to complete the first morning in third place, just two seconds off the lead.

"I received positive feedback about the performance of the MICHELIN LATITUDE Cross H2 from the teams and drivers. That's especially satisfying this year because the conditions were much harsher than usual," notes **Jacques MORELLI**, the manager of Michelin's rally programmes. "It's important to remember that the regulations only allow one type of tyre for all the championship's gravel rounds, even though the conditions differ greatly from one event to the next. In Mexico, the MICHELIN LATITUDE Cross H2 showed that Michelin has successfully grasped the thinking of the FIA [Fédération Internationale de l'Automobile] by developing a solution that is strong and durable, yet still very competitive."

#### RC1 class: OGIER / INGRASSIA (VW Polo R WRC) on top in Mexico

The 2014 Rally Mexico saw victory go to the 2013 Manufacturers' world champion, Volkswagen. Sébastien OGIER and Julien INGRASSIA took the lead on SS1 ('Monster Street Stage GUANAJUATO') which immediately followed the ceremonial start in the centre of the UNESCO-registered mining town. The French pair went on to produce a polished display to pull gradually clear of their chasers and finish more than a minute clear of team-mates Jari-Matti LATVALA and Miikka ANTTILA (VW Polo R WRC / Michelin). Meanwhile, third place for Thierry NEUVILLE and Nicolas GILSOUL earned Hyundai's first ever podium finish in the World Rally Championship. The Belgian crew's consistent run was aided by the reliability of the new Hyundai i20 WRC.

The complex conditions led to a number of incidents which affected the leaderboard from start to finish. Despite their strong early showing, both Citroën Total Abu Dhabi WRT's crews suffered delays, as did M-Sport and RK M-Sport's representatives.

OGIER/INGRASSIA rounded off their week in Mexico by picking up the three Power Stage bonus points ahead of Finns LATVALA/ANTTILA (two points) and HIRVONEN/LEHTINEN (one point).

The 2014 Rally Mexico was run in entirely dry and mostly sunny weather. The average temperature on the stages ranged from 14°C to 28°C.

#### RC2 class: victory for Michelin's only partner, Yuri PROTASOV

The Michelin Group has always been a firm believer that open competition between tyre manufacturers is beneficial both to the sport and to encouraging innovation, in addition to showcasing the quality of the tyres involved. This was illustrated once again in Mexico where Michelin's only partner won the RC2 class despite being up against 15 other drivers competing on the products of rival brands.





Ukraine's Yuriy PROTASOV took advantage of the speed, strength and grip delivered by his tyres whenever the stages demanded unfailing performance. "I am particularly pleased with Yuriy PROTASOV's run because, as in the RC1 class, his Michelin tyres proved very strong and competitive, even when the conditions were at their worst," says Jacques MORELLI.

### **MICHELIN LATITUDE Cross H2 and MICHELIN LATITUDE Cross S2**

**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 LATITUDE Cross 'H2':** hard-wearing, aggressive surfaces, dry conditions, temperatures over 15°C

**MICHELIN LATITUDE Cross 'S2':** smooth gravel, wet or damp, temperatures up to 15° C

**MICHELIN LATITUDE Cross 'H2':** Mexico, Portugal, Italy, Australia and Spain

**MICHELIN LATITUDE Cross 'S2':** Argentina, Poland, Finland and Great Britain

**Number of tyres available for the 2014 Rally Mexico:** 760

**Allocation for RC1 and RC2 drivers:** 24 for the event (five tyre-change opportunities) + 4 for shakedown

**Tyres available for each RC1 and RC2 driver:**

- 24 MICHELIN LATITUDE Cross H2s
- 16 MICHELIN LATITUDE Cross S2s

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