

2019 FIA World Rally Championship
Round 6: COPEC Rally Chile

Successful Rally Chile debuts for the MICHELIN LTX Force M6 and MICHELIN LTX Force H4

The first Rally Chile to count towards the FIA World Rally Championship has been described as a blend of Australia, Finland and Wales by the players who were in South America for the landmark event. The country's first WRC qualifier featured a broad spread of humidity levels and temperatures which had a big influence on car set-ups and, of course, tyre strategies.

The stages – the majority of which were located near the Pacific coast – threw up a wide variety of surface types, ranging from those with a sandy top-coating reminiscent of Rally Finland, to harder, stone- or gravel-littered roads. There was also a certain amount of mud due to the week's showery weather. The morning starts tended to be chilly and the thermometer failed to climb much higher than 20°C during the afternoons. Fog was an issue at times, too.

To cover this assortment of conditions, Michelin provided its WRC partners with a choice between the medium-compound MICHELIN LTX Force M6 and the harder MICHELIN LTX Force H4, while those WRC2 runners competing on the French firm's products could choose between the soft-compound MICHELIN Latitude Cross S80 and the hard MICHELIN Latitude Cross H90. Given the chilly weather and the variety of stage surfaces, the softer of the two options turned out to be the predominant fitment, although some drivers attempted different strategies at times, including Sébastien Ogier (Citroën C3 WRC) who left service for Saturday afternoon's loop of three tests carrying three MICHELIN LTX Force H4s and two LTX Force M6s, while his rivals all opted for five LTX Force H4s.

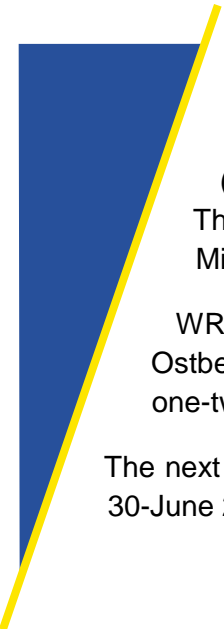
"It was nice to discover Rally Chile," said **Arnaud Rémy**, the manager of Michelin's rally programmes. "Tackling this new event for the first time was an interesting experience for us. The scenery and stages were very varied and the crews put on a quality show, with only small gaps opening up between the front-runners from start to finish. The week enabled us to provide another demonstration of the versatility of Michelin's WRC tyres, although the damp conditions and low temperatures prompted the drivers to prefer the medium-compound MICHELIN LTX Force M6 which stood up well to the demands that were made of it."

"Our runners in the WRC2 Pro and WRC2 classes were pleased with our tyres, as well, especially the Chilean drivers who were competing on them for the very first time. They were swift to praise not only their quality, but also the feedback they delivered, their resistance to wear and their faster cornering performance compared with the covers they are accustomed to running. We were glad they were able to sample our tyres and that they were won over by them. Rally Chile was also valuable for us from the technical point of view because we go home with plenty of good data."



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The first Rally Chile to count towards the WRC was won by Ott Tänak/Martin Järveoja (Toyota Yaris WRC), ahead of Sébastien Ogier/Julien Ingrassia (Citroën C3 WRC). Third-placed Sébastien Loeb/Daniel Elena (Hyundai i20 Coupe WRC) made it an all-Michelin podium.

WRC2 honours went to Finns Rovaniemi/Halttunen (Skoda Fabia R5), ahead of Norway's Ostberg/Eriksen (Citroën C3 R5). Britons Greensmith/Edmondson rounded out a Michelin one-two-three in this class which permits open competition between tyre manufacturers.

The next round of the 2009 FIA World Rally Championship will take teams to Portugal on May 30-June 2.



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