

MEDIA INFORMATION

2017 FIA World Rally Championship (WRC)
Round 8: ORLEN 74th Rally Poland

The MICHELIN LTX Force S5 ready for Rally Poland's high-speed ride

Once again, it is the small town of Mikolajki – a drive of around four hours from Warsaw – that will host the ORLEN 74th Rally Poland. The Masurian Lake District offers a landscape of forests and lakes and a network extremely fast but notoriously narrow sandy tracks.

Crews frequently average speeds of 125kph, with top speeds in excess of the 200kph mark along tree-lined roads, while the background is often compared with that of Rally Finland which follows in the WRC calendar. Rally Poland features far fewer spectacular jumps, however.

The menu of this year's event includes 338.34km of competitive action (58 percent of which is new) divided into 23 stages and a total route length of 1,422.63km.

The sandy roads are covered in a compact crust but are amongst the softest visited by the championship. Michelin's partners will consequently be able to count on the soft-compound MICHELIN LTX Force S5 which stands out as the main recommendation for both the first and second passes. The MICHELIN LTX Force S5 was introduced in March for Rally Mexico and has already forged a reputation for being particularly versatile, although the harder MICHELIN LTX Force H4 will be available for Rally Poland, too, if required. Meanwhile, the French firm's WRC2 partners are expected to favour the soft-compound MICHELIN Latitude Cross S80, with the harder Latitude Cross H90 on hand as an alternative, just in case.

"With the exception of some harder portions, where there can be buried stones, the ground encountered in Poland is the softest of the entire championship," notes **Jacques Morelli**, the manager of Michelin's FIA WRC programme. "If the weather is dry, the phenomenon of 'road sweeping' will probably play a big role again by handicapping the first crews on the road, although the penalty to pay isn't quite as high when you're talking about average speeds of around 125kph. The front-running crews stand to lose perhaps half-a-minute on the first leg, but that sort of deficit can be made up on the following days. In contrast, if the weather is wet, and that could well be the case this year, the first crew on the road stands to gain between one- and three-tenths of a second per kilometre as grip levels deteriorate with each passing car and ruts begin to form".

THE MICHELIN LTX Force H4 and S5

The MICHELIN LTX Force H4 (hard compound) and MICHELIN LTX Force S5 (soft) were designed to cover the broad range of conditions encountered on the FIA World Rally Championship's gravel rounds and their specification was registered with the FIA (Fédération Internationale de l'Automobile) prior to the start of the season.



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Because of the exceptional spectrum of temperatures, types of ground (soft, hard, rough, smooth, etc.) and weather (rain, dry, dust, mud) drivers can expect to face in the course of the year, the MICHELIN LTX Force H4 and S5 have to be extremely versatile. They consequently combine strength, résistance to wear and the consistent delivery of performance over even the longest loops of stages on events that range from hot and sunny, such as Rally Australia, to muddy Wales Rally GB. Michelin Motorsport's engineers benefited from the company's long and successful association with the FIA World Rally Championship to design these latest-generation gravel tyres. The lessons learned on the stages provide invaluable data for the development of Michelin road tyres, in keeping with the brand's policy of using motorsport as a proving ground for new technologies.

The MICHELIN LTX Force S5/H4 (for WRC crews)

Number of tyres available for Rally Poland: **700**

Number of tyres per driver: 28 (including 4 for shakedown) from an overall allocation of 28 S5s (soft compound) and 16 H4s (hard)

The MICHELIN LATITUDE Cross H90/S80 (for WRC2 crews)

Number of tyres available for Rally Poland: **722**

Number of tyres per driver: 26 (including 4 for shakedown) from an overall allocation of 26 S80s (soft compound) and 16 H90s (hard)

Michelin's staff for the 2017 Rally Poland

Michelin has a staff of 16 in Poland:

- **Jacques Morelli** (FIA WRC programme manager)
- 2 coordinators
- 4 Team Tyre Advisors
- 8 fitters
- 1 press officer



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