

2019 FIA World Rally Championship
Round 11/14: Rally Turkey

The MICHELIN LTX Force finishes on top after an extraordinarily punishing Rally Turkey

Since Rally Turkey's return to the FIA World Rally Championship calendar in 2018, the event has stood out as the toughest dirt clash of the campaign. Despite its move to the pleasant seaside resort of Marmaris on the country's southwest coast, and in contrast to the idyllic views spectators enjoyed from the mountain stages that looked out over the Mediterranean, this year's itinerary turned out to be a punishing test for the cars and crews alike due an awesome cocktail of potholes, huge rocks and sharp stones that were an additional test for tyres.

"Rally Turkey is a one-off event. The inherent challenge of its stages, their profile and the terrain they take in are more readily associated with cross-country rallying," said **Arnaud Rémy**, the manager of Michelin's rally programmes. "Thanks to our analysis of the data we collected here last year, we knew what to expect this time around, but so much is down to good or bad luck on this type of rally. This year, the crews had to contend not only with the phenomenon of hanging dust, but also with huge rocks, abrasive track surfaces and big ruts which formed during the first passes and which clearly influenced how the week unfolded. None of the cars survived unscathed and their underbodies took a hammering, so that gives an idea of the role played by our tyres which had to deliver performance, robustness and longevity in extraordinarily gruelling conditions. So, given the outcome, we are pleased to have concluded this year's Rally Turkey with a positive result."

The format of the 2019 Rally Turkey was very similar to that of 12 months ago, with a menu of 309.86 competitive kilometres (compared with 321.20km last season) and a total distance of 985.33 kilometres – an increase of about 100km over last year due to the lengthening of certain road sections. The week was marked by temperatures of up to 35°C on Days 1 and 2. There were heavy showers on Friday afternoon but Sunday morning's short run – less than 40 competitive kilometres – was a little less demanding. The order was practically settled on Saturday after the two attempts at Çetibeli (38.15km), the longest stage of the week and a highlight of the rally which gave Michelin's partners a chance to gauge the overall reliability of their tyres.

The WRC runners were able to choose between the hard-compound MICHELIN LTX Force H4 and medium LTX Force M6 and, as expected, the former was the most widely favoured option. That said, it is interesting to note that some drivers occasionally opted for an alternative strategy by fitting the softer, and theoretically more 'vulnerable' version in a bid to benefit from extra grip. This was Sébastien Ogier's ploy for Saturday morning's loop, for example. In WRC2, the soft-compound MICHELIN Latitude Cross S80 and harder Latitude Cross H90 were available, but Michelin's partners ran the harder H90 from start to finish in this particular class where strategy focused more on whether to carry two spares, or just one.



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The 2019 Rally Turkey was won by Sébastien Ogier/Julien Ingrassia, ahead of Citroën C3 WRC team-mates Esapekka Lappi/Janne Ferme. Andreas Mikkelsen/Anders Jaeger (Hyundai i20 Coupe WRC) were third to make it an all-Michelin podium.

The winners of the fierce battle in WRC2 Pro were Britons Greensmith/Edmonson (M-Sport Ford Fiesta R5), ahead of the Czech Republic's Kopecki/Dresler (Skoda Fabia R5). Finns Rovaniemi/Haltunen (Skoda Fabia R5) rounded out the top three which was another all-Michelin affair.

The next round of the 2019 FIA World Rally Championship will take teams to Great Britain for Wales Rally GB on October 3-6.



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