

2019 FIA World Rally Championship
Round 12/14: Wales Rally GB

The MICHELIN LTX Force M6 and S6 deliver in wet Wales
Successful debut for Michelin's new WRC2 range

Pre-start forecasts offered little hope of sunshine during this year's Wales Rally GB and, although the service park in Llandudno didn't see much rain up until Saturday morning, it was a very different picture out in the forests where the conditions proved extremely wet and foggy, even for the second passes, while temperatures ranged from 6°C and 14°C.

This adverse weather resulted in the North Wales stages becoming coated in a treacherously slippery film of dirt which meant grip was at a premium, yet the competitive performance provided by the soft-compound LTX Force S6 enabled Michelin's partners to push safely and provide spectators with a spectacular show.

As the rally progressed, crews were forced to manage their respective tyre allocations, and so we saw a variety of strategies being implemented, with the medium-compound MICHELIN LTX Force M6 emerging as the most frequently preferred option. It allowed the WRC runners to benefit from its outstanding versatility and efficient balance between grip, resistance to wear, sidewall strength and outright performance.

The new MICHELIN Latitude Cross S70 a hit in WRC2

For the first time, competitors in the world championship's steppingstone class had access to Michelin's new WRC2 range which comprises three different compounds. Only two are authorised for each event, however, and the nominated tyres for Wales Rally GB were the medium-compound MICHELIN Latitude Cross M80 plus the softer, all-new Latitude Cross S70.

Developed by Michelin Motorsport's engineers over a period of several months, the newcomer is designed to deliver maximum efficiency in wet and/or cold conditions (up to 15 °C), which made it perfect for the week's conditions!

It was a popular choice therefore, but the FIA allowance of just 16 tyres for the entire rally often resulted in the WRC2 drivers combining it with the medium alternative in order to save sufficient quantities for the final leg on Sunday morning.

"There was a big contrast between last year's and this year's Wales Rally GB," noted **Arnaud Rémy**, the manager of Michelin's rally programmes. "Following the event's move to an earlier slot in the calendar, there was a chance we might see some milder weather and that's effectively what we got in 2018."



Didier Laurent – didier@autopressclub.com – Phone: +33.6.75.60.50.62

Alessandro Barlozzi – alessandro.barlozzi@michelin.com – Phone: +33.6.42.23.55.93



“This time around, however, storms made the stages extremely difficult and an even bigger challenge for our tyres. We had good reason to believe everything would go well in WRC, but we had no hindsight with regard to our new WRC2 line-up, even though we were reassured by the results we obtained during the testing and development phase. The MICHELIN Latitude Cross S70 was consequently something of a leap into the unknown, but its debut turned out to be highly successful.”

The 2019 Wales Rally GB featured a menu of 22 special stages totalling 309.76 kilometres. Overall winners were Ott Tänak/Martin Jarveoja (Toyota Yaris WRC), ahead of Thierry Neuville/Nicolas Gilsoul (Hyundai i20 Coupé WRC), while Sébastien Ogier/Julien Ingrassia (Citroën C3 WRC) made it an all-Michelin podium.

The WRC2 Pro contest was won by Finns Rovaniemi/Halttunen ahead of Skoda Fabia R5 teammates Kopecky/Hloušek from the Czech Republic. Third were Britons Greensmith/Edmondson (Ford Fiesta R5) who made it an all-Michelin top-three in this class, too.

Next FIA WRC event RallyRACC Catalunya – Rally de Espana will take place from October 25th to 27th in the Costa Daurada touristic region, about 100 kilometres away from Barcelona.



Didier Laurent – didier@autopressclub.com – Phone: +33.6.75.60.50.62

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