

2018 FIA World Rally Championship (WRC)

Round 8: Neste Rally Finland

New MICHELIN LTX Force tyre options from Rally Finland

The 2018 Rally Finland will see Michelin introduce changes to its tyre range for the FIA World Rally Championship. Although the regulations have not changed (teams will continue to have a choice between two types of compound per event), Michelin has added a third option to its selection of gravel tyres alongside the LTX Force H4 (hard compound) and the new soft-compound LTX Force S6 to provide crews with additional combination possibilities.

The new 'M6' medium-compound LTX Force slots into the line-up between the existing hard-compound 'H4' tyre and the new soft-compound 'S6'. "Thanks to the broader choice we now propose, we will be able to finetune our response to the specific characteristics of the World Rally Championship's individual dirt rounds," observes **Arnaud Rémy**, the manager of Michelin's rally programmes. "The existing MICHELIN LTX Force H4 and S5 already provided a versatile choice because of their ability to cover a wide variety of terrains, from the sun-scorched tracks of Sardinia and Australia to Mexico's high-altitude stages and the muddy Welsh forests. Now, with the availability of three compounds, our partners will be able to benefit from more targeted solutions that will help them to be even more competitive in conditions like soft to damp or even wet ground. The M6 compound will almost certainly be an option for all rounds, in addition to either the new S6 or H4 depending on the specific features of each event."

The 2018 Neste Rally Finland is the first round of the world championship where teams have been able to benefit from this new arrangement, with a choice between the MICHELIN LTX Force S6 (soft) and LTX Force M6 (medium) for the soft ground and high speeds that characterise the Finnish stages. Meanwhile, WRC2 crews will be able to opt for either the MICHELIN Latitude Cross S80 (soft) or Latitude Cross H90 (hard).

The 2018 Rally Finland packs numerous changes compared with last year's event. Almost two-thirds of the stage distance is different and some 40 percent is either new or hasn't been used for many years and consequently represents new territory for today's crop of drivers. The service park is again based in Jyväskylä in the southern central part of the country, and competitors face a menu of 23 stages totalling 317.26 kilometres for a total distance of 1,427.49km. The rally kicks off on Thursday evening with a mixed-surface super-special in Jyväskylä, while serious business begins with Friday's morning and afternoon visits to Moksi, Urria, Ässämäki and Äänekoski, all of which are new tests. Saturday promises to be the toughest leg with a total competitive distance of almost 143km in the Jämsä region over a period of 16 hours. Although the legendary Ouninpohja stage doesn't figure in its traditional form this year, Päijälä takes in part of the roller-coaster classic. Finally, all of Sunday's action will be based to the west of Jyväskylä with two attempts each at Laukaa and Ruuhimäki, two tests reputed for their spectacular jumps.



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“The stages on Friday and Sunday are slightly more technical,” notes **Arnaud Rémy**, “so average speeds promise to be a little lower than on Saturday, even though they will still be very high – around 110/115kph. The ground tends to be less compact than the Jämsä sages, too, and the gaps could well be bigger. If the weather is dry, running first on the road on Friday’s gravel-strewn tracks could be a handicap and dropping 20 seconds on a single loop can be hard to overcome in the fight for the win. That said, as on every round of the championship, anything can happen in Finland.”

MICHELIN LTX Force – Technical data

MICHELIN LTX Force H4 / MICHELIN LATITUDE Cross H90: rough, hard-wearing stages /dry ground / temperature > 15°C

MICHELIN LTX Force M6 / MICHELIN LATITUDE Cross S80: soft or damp / temperature < 15°C

MICHELIN LTX Force S6: very soft, damp or wet ground / temperature < 15°C

The MICHELIN LTX Force S6 and M6 (WRC crews)

Number of tyres available in Finland: **620**

Allocation per WRC driver: 24 tyres (not including shakedown) from a total allocation of 24 mediums (M6) and 16 softs (S6)

The MICHELIN LATITUDE Cross H90 and S80 (WRC2 crews)

Number of tyres available in Finland: **780**

Allocation per WRC2 driver: 22 tyres (not including shakedown) from a total allocation of 22 softs (S80) and 16 hards (H90)

Michelin staff for the 2018 Rally Finland

Michelin’s partners at the 2018 Rally Finland will be backed by a total staff of 16:

- **Arnaud Rémy** (Rally Programme Manager)
- 4 team advisors
- 2 coordinators
- 8 fitters
- 1 press officer



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