

**2020 FIA World Rally Championship (FIA WRC)  
Round 7: ACI Rally Monza**

## **ACI Rally Monza to bring Michelin's FIA World Rally Championship involvement to a close**

The upheaval to which the 2020 FIA World Rally Championship has been subjected has prompted its organisers to show plenty of creative thinking, an eloquent example of this being the season's seventh and final fixture which is a brand-new addition to the series. The round in question is this weekend's ACI Rally Monza (December 3-6) which is based at the famous circuit of the same name to the north of Italy's economic capital, Milan.

The event itself has existed since 1978 as the highly popular Monza Rally Show, but this is the first time it has featured on the WRC calendar. As a result, Italy joins Finland and Great Britain as the only countries that have hosted world-class rallying action on 46 occasions since the championship's creation in 1973. It also becomes the first nation in the competition's 48-year history to organise two rounds on its soil in close proximity after staging the Rally d'Italia Sardegna in October.

Because this is the first time the event is counting towards the WRC, Michelin Motorsport and its partners have little information with regard to tyres, in spite of the data that has been collected during previous Monza Rally Shows over the years.

With both the 2020 Drivers' and Manufacturers' titles still both up for grabs at the season's finale, tyres stand to play a decisive role yet again and Michelin has provided teams with its complete asphalt range, from the hard-compound MICHELIN Pilot Sport H5 and the softer MICHELIN Pilot Sport S6 , to the MICHELIN Pilot Sport FW 3 (FW = Full Wet) and the MICHELIN Pilot Alpin A4 to cover the eventuality of snow.

Crews competing on Michelin rubber in the WRC2 and WRC3 classes have a similar choice between the MICHELIN Pilot Sport R3 (hard compound), the Pilot Sport RS (soft), the Pilot Sport A MW 1 (rain) and the NA00 snow tyre.

WRC drivers will be authorised to use up to 28 covers (including shakedown) from an overall allocation of 24 hard-compound tyres, 18 softs, 12 FW 3s and eight snow tyres. WRC2 and WRC3 runners will be allowed to use up to 26 tyres from a quota of 22 hards, 16 softs, 12 rain tyres and eight NA00s.

"In addition to marking the end of Michelin's involvement in the WRC, this rally has put the subject of tyres firmly at the centre of conversations," notes **Arnaud Rémy**, the manager of Michelin's rally programmes. "We've got our entire WRC asphalt range here and our technical advisors have a key role to play with regard to establishing tyre strategies. This is the first time Rally Monza has counted towards the FIA WRC calendar, so it is uncharted territory for the teams at a time when both the 2020 Drivers' and Manufacturers' titles have yet to be settled. The part of the rally that takes place at the circuit itself will be a big challenge in terms of tyre management, since the track layout and the unique characteristics of its surface clearly differ from what we are accustomed to. The weather has brought some surprises, too, so this has the makings of being a very interesting, if tricky few days."



The 2020 ACI Rally Monza features a menu of 16 special stages totalling 241.14 kilometres and a total distance of 502.66km, making it the most compact round ever organised. Action will take place at Monza Circuit using parts of the banked track and service roads, along with a visit to the mountains near Lake Como north of Monza.

Thursday morning's shakedown will be followed by the week's first super-special which uses the same test, in reverse, early the same afternoon. Friday will see crews tackle a loop of five stages totalling 69.61km and Saturday's schedule lists seven stages and 126.95 additional competitive kilometres before the last three speed tests – including the Power Stage – on Sunday morning.

The event is the final outing of Michelin's current long spell in the FIA World Rally Championship which has seen it win practically all the individual rounds and every Drivers' and Manufacturers' crown since its comeback season in 2011.

The chief statistics of Michelin's successful adventure in the FIA WRC since the championship's creation in 1973 are listed below.

### **“The FIA WRC has brought Michelin so much”**

**Matthieu Bonardel** (Director, Michelin Motorsport): “Although Michelin is bowing out of world-class rallying after Rally Monza, it has played an active part in the championship's history. Since the series was first organised in 1973, we have missed just seven seasons and our tyres are associated with some of its most memorable episodes. While Michelin has brought its expertise and passion to the table for many years, the WRC has in turn contributed considerably to the progress our tyres have made and to increasing the global awareness of our brand.

“Over the course of our 41-year involvement, Michelin has introduced a range of unique technologies developed to combine safety, performance and resilience. In this respect, the World Rally Championship has served as an invaluable high-tech laboratory for our research and development department.

“The WRC hasn't only been valuable to us in technical terms, however. Thanks to this unique championship, which has taken in and continues to take in so many superb backdrops across the world, Michelin has benefited from close contact with the huge community of passionate rally fans. We feel honoured to have received such a warm welcome from them and are proud to have helped provide them with such a high-quality spectacle. From the leaps of Rally Finland and the punishing stages of Greece and Turkey, to Rallye Deutschland's infamous Panzerplatte stages, the wintry Rallye Monte-Carlo and many, many other exacting challenges, Michelin tyres have taken it all in their stride and stood out through their performance and durability.

“Again thanks to the WRC, Michelin has had the privilege of working alongside a prestigious list of teams and manufacturers, as well as with the men and women who operate at the heart of this sport which makes demands matched by few other disciplines. We have also had close associations with numerous drivers and co-drivers who have enjoyed success thanks to their talent and race-craft, as well to as the reliability and performance of their cars and Michelin tyres.



“Today, Michelin is steering its investment to sustainable innovation. But while we may be withdrawing from the world rally arena, we will continue work with our customers at the sport’s regional, national and local levels, for which we have developed a bespoke range of tyres and services.

“I am sure our departure is more an ‘au-revoir’ than an ‘adieu’, however. It is quite possible that Michelin will return to the championship once the in-depth evolution it has initiated in keeping with the vision for motorsport championed by the FIA is completed.”

### Michelin targeting its 347<sup>th</sup> world-class victory at Monza

Michelin has carved out an unrivalled record in the FIA World Rally Championship since the competition’s creation in January 1973. The statistics below (some of which are conditioned by Rally Monza’s official results) reveal how big a part Michelin has played in the series over more than four decades:

**347** victories

More than **7,500** special stage wins, with **58** different drivers

More than **1,000** podium placings

**30** Manufacturers’ world titles, with **11** different carmakers

**28** Drivers’ world titles, with **12** different drivers\*

*(\*) 13 different drivers if Elfyn Evans wins the 2020 title.*

