

**2019 FIA World Rally Championship**  
**Round 6/14: COPEC Rally Chile**

***The MICHELIN LTX Force H4 and M6 to explore new ground in Chile***

It was announced at the end of 2018 that the FIA World Rally Championship would be expanded to 14 rounds this season with the inclusion of Chile, the 32nd country to be visited by the WRC since the latter's creation in 1973. As a result, none of the drivers or co-drivers have any prior experience of the event's stages, while teams are prohibited from testing elsewhere than in Europe, so this is genuinely uncharted territory for the championship. That said, Rally Chile will be the third gravel fixture of the 2019 campaign (after Mexico and Argentina), so the different players have already had a chance to glean data on the loose, a category which itself covers a broad variety of different surface types.

The Chilean organisers have based their rally near Concepción, a bustling port with a population of around 200,000 that sits roughly halfway up the country's coast. The city itself is the capital of the province of the same name, as well as of the Biobío region which is braced for the visit of thousands of rally fans this week. The service park is located in Talcahuano, close to both the airport and the town centre, which should facilitate access to the event's nerve centre to admire the cars and see the crews at close quarters. Meanwhile, the stages promise to provide superb views over the ocean and countryside in the strip of land that separates the Pacific coast and the Rio Biobío, Chile's second-longest river.

The 2019 Rally Chile features 17 stages totalling 325.7 kilometres for a total distance of 1,199.24km, starting on Friday morning and concluding on Sunday afternoon, preceded by an official start ceremony on Thursday evening in the centre of Concepción (Plaza de la Independencia). Friday's leg will take crews south for two loops of challenging forest stages. Saturday's menu will be divided similarly into two compact loops before ending with a spectacular spectator test in Concepción. Proceedings will finish with four more stages on Sunday in a very different setting, including the Power Stage which will start on the banks of the Rio Biobío and end by the sea.

To cover these intense three days of competitive action on dirt, Michelin's WRC partners will be able to choose between the medium-compound MICHELIN LTX Force M6 and the harder MICHELIN LTX Force H4. Meanwhile, crews competing on the French firm's rubber in the WRC2 class will have a choice between the soft-compound MICHELIN Latitude Cross S80 and the hard MICHELIN H90. These are the same choices they had for April's Rally Argentina.

"This is basically uncharted territory for everybody," says **Arnaud Rémy**, the manager of Michelin's rally programmes. "Some of the stages are held on forest tracks that have tree trunks and stones on the insides of many corners. They can also be very fast and bumpy in places."





“We don’t have much precise data about how our tyres are likely to perform here but we have placed the emphasis on safety by nominating the medium- and hard-compound versions of the LTX Force, which are more versatile. We are especially keen to see how ‘El Puma’ goes. It’s more than 30km in length and looks similar to a Rally GB stage. It will be early autumn in the Concepción region, so we expect the weather will be dry, with temperatures ranging between 8°C and 18°C. That said, there was heavy rain last week but the stages shouldn’t cut up too badly, even though the second passes are likely to be a bit more complex. Those running further down the start order could well benefit from better grip because we think the early runners might be affected by the phenomenon of ‘road sweeping’ if the weather stays dry, but wear rates aren’t likely to be all that high.”

### **The MICHELIN LTX Force M6 and MICHELIN LTX Force H4 (WRC runners)**

Number of tyres available for Rally Chile: **584**

Drivers were authorised use up to 28 tyres (including shakedown) from a total allocation of 28 M6s (medium compound) and 16 H4 (hard compound).

### **The MICHELIN LATITUDE Cross H90 and MICHELIN LATITUDE Cross S80 (WRC2 runners)**

Number of tyres available for Rally Chile: **336**

Drivers were authorised to use up to 26 tyres (including shakedown) from a total allocation of 26 H90s (hard compound) and 16 S80s (soft compound).

### **Michelin’s staff for the 2019 COPEC Rally Chile**

Michelin will have a staff of 12 in Chile:

- **Arnaud Rémy** (manager of Michelin’s rally programmes)
- 2 coordinators
- 4 technical team advisors (CTEs)
- 4 fitters
- 1 Press officer

