

2017 FIA World Rally Championship (WRC)
Round 2: Rally Sweden

***The MICHELIN X-Ice North 3 ready
for Scandinavia's ice and snow challenge***

After last February's big thaw, which led to the cancellation of eight of the 2016 Rally Sweden's 21 initially-planned stages due to a general lack of snow and ice in the region, the organisers have struck further north this year to maximise the chances of seasonal conditions for the WRC's only snow and ice fixture. Due to the relative uniformity of its wintry stages, Rally Sweden is actually the most straightforward round of the championship when it comes to tyre strategy, since crews have only one option and the nominated tyre for Michelin's partners is the MICHELIN X-Ice North 3, each one of which is equipped with 384 studs.

The 2017 route will visit remote forests in Sweden and Norway after getting under way with the traditional super-special at Karlstad's trotting track. All but one of Friday's stages will be hosted by Norway, with the start and finish of the opening leg on the Swedish side of the border. Saturday's menu will feature classic tests near Hagfors, including 'Knon' which hasn't been used for 14 years.

The overall distance of the 2017 Rally Sweden is 1,415.10 kilometres, including 18 stages totalling 331.74km. The service park has moved from Hagfors to Torsby, a little further to the north.

Michelin's WRC programme manager **Jacques Morelli** knows the region very well: "We base ourselves in the Torsby region when we do our pre-Rally Sweden testing, so our partners will be on familiar territory. This year's event visits classic tests like 'Vargasen', 'Varmullsasen' and 'Likenas' which last figured on the programme in 2011, a year there was plenty of snow. The 'Torsby' stage, which will be tackled on the first and last legs, is sure to be icy because it is regularly sprayed with water. Some big gaps may well have opened up by the first attempt after Day 1's action in Norway. Let's just hope that there won't be too much exposed dirt because the studs tend to suffer more on bare gravel and are consequently less effective on the ensuing icy portions. The more powerful latest-generation World Rally Cars will make bigger demands on them, too, so the drivers will need to manage their tyres carefully, by braking less aggressively and swapping them around during the different competitive loops."

The MICHELIN X-ICE NORTH

The 384 steel and tungsten studs which equip each MICHELIN X-Ice North 3 tyre measure 20mm in length, 6.5mm of which protrude from the tyre.



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Ahead of the 2015 Rally Sweden, Michelin Motorsport's engineers developed a new compound for the MICHELIN X-Ice North 3 which optimises the way the studs strike the ground. Meanwhile, its open tread pattern makes it a particularly versatile solution for the wintry conditions associated with the event (snow, ice, frozen dirt, frozen mud).

WRC drivers may use up to 32 tyres (including shakedown), while the maximum allowance for WRC2 runners is 30 tyres.

Technical characteristics of the MICHELIN X-Ice North 3

Size: 195/65R15 (15/65-15)

Tread pattern: asymmetrical and directional (a right- and a left-hand tyre)

Number of studs per tyre: 384 (20 per linear decimetre, in compliance with FIA regulations)

Overall stud length: 20 mm; visible stud length: 6.5 mm; stud weight: 4 grams

Optimal operating window: minus 30°C to 0°C

Total number of tyres available for the 2017 Rally Sweden: 1,020 (WRC: 450 / WRC2: 570)

Michelin's staff in Sweden

Michelin's has a total staff of 17 for the 2017 Rally Sweden:

- 1 manager
- 1 marketing director
- 2 developers
- 2 coordinators
- 4 team advisers
- 8 fitters
- 1 press officer



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