

MEDIA INFORMATION

2017 FIA World Rally Championship (WRC)

Round 1: Rallye Monte-Carlo

MICHELIN tyres cover all the conditions on 2017 Rallye Monte-Carlo

The opening clash of the 2017 FIA World Rally Championship saw Sébastien Ogier and Julien Ingrassia celebrate their maiden appearance for M-Sport with victory in Monaco. Varied, complex conditions ensured that the famous Rallye Monte-Carlo lived up every bit to its reputation.

The season's difficult opener proved a tense affair from start to finish as the latest-generation World Rally Cars made their first public appearance. More spectacular and more powerful, the new machines thrilled the huge crowds that lined the event's 17 challenging stages which provided a total competitive distance of more than 380km. As ever, the conditions were rarely consistent from one loop to the next and were even highly varied on individual tests.

"We had to cover the whole spectrum of typical Monte Carlo conditions," said **Jacques Morelli**, the manager of Michelin's World Rally Championship programme. "It was cold throughout, and the crews also had to contend with fresh and melting snow, ice and frost, as well as dry and wet asphalt. This year's Rallye Monte-Carlo lived up its promise and delivered all the ingredients expected of the rally, which in turn made tyre choices extremely difficult. The teams were naturally able to count on their previous experience of the rally, but Michelin's technicians were once again invaluable allies in the decision-making process."

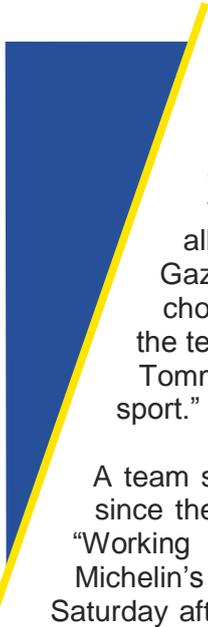
While only two types of tyre are available for all the other rounds of the WRC (asphalt and gravel), the unique characteristics of the Rallye Monte Carlo necessitate four different solutions to cover all the bases. The range extended from the soft- and super soft-compound MICHELIN Pilot Sport S5 and MICHELIN Pilot Sport SS5 (for very low temperatures and frost), to the MICHELIN Pilot Alpin A4 (snow) and a studded version of the latter (MICHELIN Pilot Alpin A4 CL) for ice. Choices were based on the information available about the state of the roads high in the mountains and it was frequently a case of selecting the ideal compromise for mixed conditions as a function of each stage's profile. "It was probably the most complex Rallye Monte-Carlo competitors have had to contend with for more than 20 years," said **Michel**, Michelin's Technical Advisor delegated to work with Citroën Racing. "That said, some loops were more straightforward than others in terms of tyre strategy. When the ground is icy from start to finish, you know the drivers can leave service with up to six MICHELIN Pilot Alpin A4 CLs, but the final word is always with the teams, and it was never easy."

"In addition to choosing the best tyre for the conditions, you also need to take the teams' respective strategies of the moment into account," added **Guillaume**, Michelin's Technical Advisor for Hyundai Motorsport. "Depending on the drivers' positions and start orders, tyre choices can differ. One driver might want to push hard, for example, while another may prefer to take fewer risks. It's a case of providing them with the right option at the right time based on an analysis of the risks. The number of spare wheels they carry can also differ sometimes."



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

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



The regulations allow up to two spares, but sometimes the drivers prefer to take just one for weight reasons, especially on stages where there is less risk for tyres. Some teams always took two, however, whatever the conditions. “The main thing was to get all the cars to the finish,” remarked **Hugues**, Michelin’s Technical Advisor at Toyota Gazoo Racing WRC. “From the start, the cars always left with two spares, but often with a choice of compounds so the crews could swap if the conditions evolved. Although it was the team’s first WRC appearance, we were able to benefit from the experience of its director Tommi Mäkinen who is a four-time Rallye Monte-Carlo winner. Rallying really is a team sport.”

A team sport it may be, but the job of the Technical Advisors comes with big responsibilities, since they need to be able to optimise their recommendations despite the shifting conditions. “Working with a four-time world champion effectively adds to the pressure,” observed the Michelin’s Technical Advisor to M-Sport. “When Ford was chasing Thierry Neuville who led up to Saturday afternoon, it carefully adapted its strategy to meet the priorities of the moment. Its work ended up paying and the reward was victory on Sunday!”

The 2017 Rallye Monte-Carlo was won by Sébastien Ogier/Julien Ingrassia (M-Sport) who finished ahead of Jari-Matti Latvala/Miika Antilla (Toyota Gazoo Racing/Toyota Yaris) and Ott Tanak/Martin Jarveoja in the other Ford Fiesta WRC run by the independent team M-Sport. All three cars were on Michelin tyres.

The French tyre manufacturer took the spoils in WRC2, too, with Andreas Mikkelsen/Anders Jaeger Synnevaag. Fellow Skoda R5 runners Jan Kopecki/Pavel Dresler were second in the class. Michelin equipped Bryan Bouffier and Denis Giraudet, on their Ford Fiesta R5, claimed third position on the podium.

The next round of the 2017 FIA World Rally Championship will take teams to Sweden on February 9-12.

Michelin’s tyres for the 2017 Rallye Monte-Carlo

Although the FIA (Fédération Internationale de l’Automobile) only authorises the use of one type of tyre and a choice of two compounds for the world championship’s other gravel and asphalt rounds, the Rallye Monte-Carlo permits a choice of four tyre types and three different compounds.

The MICHELIN Pilot Sport S5 (S=soft). This tyre is designed for use on dry asphalt at temperatures of less than 10°C, as well as for wet conditions. Available since the 2015 Rallye Deutschland, the hard-compound MICHELIN Pilot Sport H5 (not available for the Rallye Monte-Carlo) and the soft-compound MICHELIN Pilot Sport S5 were developed with the WRC’s toughest asphalt rounds in mind, like the Rallye de France-Tour de Corse. They deliver high performance on dry and wet ground and have demonstrated their ability to cope with higher power levels than those seen in 2016. They will consequently continue to be used by Michelin’s WRC partners in 2017.

The MICHELIN Pilot Sport SS5 (SS=super soft). This tyre is for use on dry or frosty roads at temperatures close to or lower than 0°C. It made its competitive debut on last year’s Rallye Monte-Carlo and features a softer compound compared with that of the MICHELIN Pilot Sport S5, but the same casing. In very cold conditions, the SS5 can deliver an improvement of up to several seconds per kilometre. It was always likely to figure prominently in the teams’ strategies on the Rallye Monte-Carlo as they endeavoured to choose the right compound as a function of the profile of each loop of stages. Size (MICHELIN Pilot Sport S5 and SS5): 235/40R18 (equivalent to 20/65-18).



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

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



Snow:

The MICHELIN Pilot Alpin A4. This tyre resembles a conventional winter tyre due to its overall profile and siped tread blocks. Its development – which was carried out in parallel with that of the MICHELIN Pilot Alpin 5 road tyre by a team of engineers from Michelin Motorsport and the Michelin Technology Centre in Ladoux, France – used data gleaned in motorsport and stands out as a prime example of how Michelin carries over the technologies developed in different forms of competition to its road tyres. The WRC tyre features a reinforced casing and was designed to withstand the constraints generated by the world's top rally cars on snowy ground, while at the same time delivering a very high level of traction, cornering control and braking performance.

Size: 215/45R18 (equivalent to 18/65-18).

Ice:

The MICHELIN Pilot Alpin A4 CL. In Nordic countries, studded tyres are commonplace in winter. However, that is not the case in France where their use is covered by strict legislation. To protect road surfaces during the Rallye Monte-Carlo, the FIA regulations allow the MICHELIN Pilot Alpin A4 CL to be fitted with just 200 studs (compared with 384 for Rally Sweden) and their tips emerge just 2mm from the tread blocks. The MICHELIN Pilot Alpin A4 CL enables drivers to contest ice-covered stages without causing damage to roads. The studs weigh less than 2g each and are inserted into the tread individually using a patented Michelin technique.



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