

2017 FIA World Rally Championship (WRC)

Round 2: Rally Sweden

***The MICHELIN X-Ice North 3 helps Toyota Gazoo Racing
WRC to maiden world class victory***

This year's Rally Sweden lived up every bit to its promise, with a mix of icy and snow-covered stages that ensured a superb show for the crowds of spectators who braved the wintry temperatures which ranged from -15°C to -5°C. There was little actual snowfall but, having had to cancel eight of the scheduled 21 stages in 2016 due to a lack of snow, the organisers had taken steps to move their event further north this year, with a service park based in Torsby. Although the region's main roads were clear, the stages provided ideal conditions for Michelin's partners who benefited from a single tyre option: the MICHELIN X-Ice North 3 equipped with 384 studs.

This year's 1,415.10-kilometre route featured 18 special stages totalling 331.74km, including the return of several classics, like Vargasen, Varmullsasen and Likenas. Meanwhile, in addition to the challenge inherent in the snowy Swedish forests, the latest-generation cars not only delivered extra power compared with their predecessors this time last year, but also boasted additional downforce thanks to more advanced aerodynamics, plus an active centre differential for higher cornering speeds. The drivers confirmed that the new cars were easier and more enjoyable to drive and gave them a better chance of surviving certain 'delicate' moments. Because of this upgraded performance and the punishment long associated with Rally Sweden's the high-speeds stages, however, questions were asked about the ability of the studs to stay in the tyres' tread blocks, but the MICHELIN X-Ice North 3 fulfilled its role perfectly.

"First of all, I would like to congratulate all our partner teams on their respective performances this weekend," said **Jacques Morelli**, manager of Michelin's FIA WRC programme. "And special congratulations, of course, to Toyota Gazoo Racing WRC who claimed their first world class victory at only their second attempt thanks to the excellent run of Jari-Matti Latvala and Miikka Anttila. The first two rounds of the season have also been marked by early domination followed by misadventures for Hyundai Motorsport, along with some outstanding performances from M-Sport, so the level of competition is clearly very high this year. As far as the MICHELIN X-Ice North 3 goes, we were understandably a little concerned before the start because of the uprated performance of the new-generation cars. At the same time, the process we use to glue the studs in our Rally Sweden tyres has been gradually finetuned over the years and stud loss has been reduced by a factor of 10 over the past decade. Despite the extra power of the cars, the main question mark concerned the state of the stages. In the end, though, the thawed dirt that was a feature of last year's rally made way for proper wintry conditions practically throughout this time round, and everything passed off perfectly. The MICHELIN X-Ice North 3 showed once again that its robustness is a real match for this gruelling event and the studs coped with the challenge extremely well yet again."



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The 2017 Rally Sweden concluded with a maiden win for Jari-Matti Latvala and Miikka Anttila in the new Toyota Yaris WRC/Michelin, while M-Sport's Michelin-equipped Ford Fiesta WRCs finished on the podium in the hands of Ott Tänak/Martin Jarveoja and Sébastien Ogier/Julien Ingrassia.

There was another close contest in WRC2 which saw Michelin monopolise the podium thanks to the runs of Pontus Tidemand/Jonas Andersson, Teemu Suninen/Mikko Markkula and Ole Veiby/Stig Skjærmoen.

The MICHELIN X-ICE NORTH 3

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

It was ahead of the 2015 Rally Sweden that Michelin Motorsport's engineers developed a new compound for the 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 Rally Sweden (snow, ice, frozen dirt, frozen mud). The WRC drivers were authorised to use up to 32 tyres (including shakedown), while the maximum allowance for the WRC2 runners was 30 tyres.

Technical characteristics

Size: 195/65R15 (15/65-15). Width: 195 mm. Sidewall height: 125 mm. Wheel diameter: 15 inches
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: 20mm. 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 had a total staff of 17 at the 2017 Rally Sweden: 1 manager, 1 marketing director, 2 developers, 2 coordinators, 4 team advisers, 8 fitters and 1 press officer.

The next round of the 2017 FIA World Rally Championship will take teams to North America on March 9-12 for Rally Mexico where Michelin Motorsport will introduce a new soft-compound gravel tyre, the MICHELIN LTX Force S5.



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