

*2018 FIA World Rally Championship (WRC)
Round 7: Rally Italia Sardegna*

***The MICHELIN LTX Force H4 and MICHELIN LTX Force S5
ready to tackle Sardinian dirt***

After the recent, incident-packed Rally de Portugal, and ahead of late July's spectacular Rally Finland, next stop for the 2018 FIA World Rally Championship will be the Mediterranean island of Sardinia for Rally Italia Sardegna. The event's trademark summer atmosphere is underpinned by the service park's location close to the beach in Alghero, a small town on the west coast where the fixture has been headquartered since 2015.

With the likelihood of temperatures into the thirty degrees Celsius, Italy's round of the WRC is always a harsh test for the crews and their cars, as well for their tyres which need to deliver a blend of performance and safety from the first to the final competitive kilometre of the event's notoriously rough, hard-packed and sun-baked stages.

The 2018 Rally Italia Sardegna features 20 tests, which is one more than last season, even though the total stage distance (313.46km) is eight kilometres shorter than it was in 2017. The event's total length stands at 1,386.38km, compared with 1,495.36km last June.

Shakedown will take competitors to Ittiri Autodrome, east of Alghero, as it has done for the last two years, while Friday's menu features the returns of 'Castelsardo' and 'Monte Baranta' which were last visited in 2016 and 2015 respectively (the latter in the opposite direction). Some minor modifications have been made to Saturday's legendary 'Monte Lerno', 'Loelle' and 'Monti Di Ala' tests, but the main difference on Day 2 will be a second trip to Ittiri. Sunday's offering is unchanged compared with 2016 and 2017 and comprises two attempts at the long 42.04km stage which runs along the coast north of Alghero.

Michelin's response to the challenge faced by WRC crews in Sardinia is a choice between the hard-compound MICHELIN LTX Force H4 and the softer MICHELIN LTX Force S5, while the options available for the French firm's WRC2 runners are the MICHELIN Latitude Cross H90 (hard) and the MICHELIN Latitude Cross S80 (soft).

"Tyres are sure to play an important role again in Sardinia," predicts **Arnaud Rémy**, the manager of Michelin's rally programmes. "The stages are relatively fast, narrow and lined by bushes and trees most of the time, but there are often concealed hazards to either side. There can consequently be a high price to pay for straying off the right line, although our partners will be able to count on the strength of their Michelin tyres which were designed to cover just this sort of scenario."



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“Another key feature of the Sardinian stages is that they are littered with surface gravel which, once swept aside, exposes a rough, hard-packed and hard-wearing base for the second passes. As a result, there is every chance that the MICHELIN LTX Force S5 will be the preferred option for the morning loops due to its versatility, with the harder-compound H4 standing out as the main choice for the repeat attempts. Sardinia is one of the toughest dirt rallies of the season and the phenomenon of ‘road sweeping’ by the first cars on the road needs to be taken into account.”

The MICHELIN LTX Force S5 and H4 (WRC crews)

Number of tyres available in Sardinia: **616**

Allocation per WRC driver: 28 tyres (including four for shakedown) from a total allocation of 24 hards and 16 softs.

The MICHELIN LATITUDE Cross H90 and S80 (WRC2 crews)

Number of tyres available in Sardinia: **378**

Allocation per WRC2 driver: 26 tyres (including four for shakedown) from a total allocation of 22 hards and 16 softs.

Michelin staff for the 2018 Rally Italia Sardegna

Michelin’s partners at the 2018 Rally Italia Sardegna will be backed by a total staff of 16:

- **Arnaud Rémy** (Rally Programme Manager)
- 4 team advisors
- 2 coordinators
- 4 fitters
- 1 press officer

