

*2018 FIA World Rally Championship  
Round 13/13: Kennards Hire Rally Australia*

***The Michelin LTX Force H4 and M6 help Sébastien Ogier  
and Julien Ingrassia secure a sixth world title***

This weekend in Australia, Frenchmen Sébastien Ogier and Julien Ingrassia have won the FIA World Rally Championship's Drivers' and Co-drivers' titles for the sixth straight year. It is their second crown in a Michelin-equipped Ford Fiesta WRC after four with Volkswagen, also in association with the French tyre brand.

Thierry Neuville/Nicolas Gilsoul (Hyundai i20 Coupe WRC) and Ott Tänak/Martin Järveoja, (Toyota Yaris WRC) claimed the year's silver and bronze medals respectively, while the Manufacturers' crown went to Toyota Gazoo Racing WRT after a strong end to the 2018 campaign, chased by Hyundai Shell Mobis WRT (2nd) and M-Sport Ford WRT (3rd).

Ahead of the season's final clash, 2018 Rally Australia, forecasters had predicted a high risk of rain but the weather stayed clear practically throughout, with only localised showers affecting Friday's run, followed by some heavier rain which swept across northern New South Wales on Saturday evening.

Crews consequently only encountered muddy conditions in places on Sunday morning and, for the vast majority of the rally, they had to cope with the event's hallmark combination of soft and hard-wearing ground. This cocktail made getting tyre choices and strategies right particularly crucial, especially as the WRC runners' available quota was restricted to 28 hard-compound MICHELIN LTX Force H4s and 16 medium M6s. Of these, they were only authorised to use up to 28 for the week's 24 stages which totalled 318.64 kilometres out of an overall route length of 1,017.07km. Both options rose to the occasion perfectly, however, to cover all the different scenarios and deliver their usual blend of performance and safety.

"I would like to congratulate Sébastien Ogier and Julien Ingrassia on winning the 2018 FIA WRC Drivers' crown," said **Arnaud Rémy**, the manager of Michelin's rallying programmes. "Congratulations, too, to Toyota Gazoo Racing WRT on claiming the Manufacturers' title after only the second year of its current spell in the series. It turned out to be a thrilling season from start to finish and the fact that both championships went down to the wire is an eloquent indication of just how close the gap is between the teams and crews. Ahead of Rally Australia, three drivers were still in contention for the title and, to be able to defend their chances safely all the way to the finish, they needed tyres that were not only competitive over the duration of every loop of stages but which also covered the complete spectrum of conditions. Prior to the start, we had expected wet and even muddy ground, but the surface turned out to be mostly dry and extremely abrasive, and therefore hard on tyres. The MICHELIN LTX Force H4 [hard compound] and MICHELIN LTX Force M6 [medium] were both designed for difficult conditions however and, even though wear rates were relatively high, they delivered peak performance throughout."



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The 2018 Rally Australia was won by Finns Jari-Matti Latvala and Miikka Anttila (Toyota Yaris WRC), ahead of Hayden Paddon/Sebastian Marshall (Hyundai i20 Coupe WRC) and Mads Ostberg/Torstein Eriksen (Citroën C3 WRC).

With the season now completed, teams will soon begin to turn their attention to their respective test programmes which are due to kick off in the coming weeks before action resumes on January 24 with the Rallye Monte-Carlo, the opening round of the 2019 FIA World Rally Championship.



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