



**2015 FIA World Rally Championship (WRC)
NESTE OIL RALLY FINLAND**

**The MICHELIN LTX Force S4 establishes new WRC records,
plus the LATITUDE Cross S80's first one-two-three finish in WRC2**

Despite changeable weather, which varied from sunny spells to heavy showers, the thousands of spectators lining the stages of the 2015 Rally Finland were treated to an exceptionally thrilling scrap between Volkswagen Motorsport's two crews: the reigning world champions Sébastien Ogier/Julien Ingrassia and local stars Jari-Matti Latvala/Miikka Anttila.

The fight eventually tipped in favour of the Finnish pair who ended up 13.7 seconds clear of their French team-mates after 319.38 competitive kilometres divided into 20 stages. It was a second straight home success for Jari-Matti Latvala and Miikka Anttila, ahead of Sébastien Ogier and Julien Ingrassia. Third place was secured by Citroën Total Abu Dhabi WRT's Mads Ostberg and his co-driver Jonas Andersson (DS3 WRC) who have strengthened their grip on third place in the provisional 2015 Drivers' standings.

The fastest Rally Finland in WRC history

Few changes were made to this year's Rally Finland format which featured the same cocktail of fast, wide forest tracks and narrower, more technical portions. This mix provided Michelin Motorsport with a chance to showcase the performance of its soft-compound MICHELIN LTX Force S4 tyre as the winners completed the distance at an average speed of more than 125kph, thrashing the previous record which had stood at 122.89kph since 2012.

This exceptional feat was helped by the grip and precision provided by the latest-generation MICHELIN LTX Force S4 which the French firm's partners used throughout the rally. It was at this event in 2014 that the current LTX Force H4 (hard compound) and S4 (soft) tyres made their debut.

Said Michelin Motorsport Director **Pascal Couasnon**: "Once again, the Neste Oil Rally Finland proved to be one of the most spectacular rounds of the season. With top speeds of around 200kph and its famous jumps, this rally is always very exacting as far as tyres are concerned. This year, the MICHELIN LTX Force S4 was submitted to particularly harsh treatment, as witnessed by the new average speed record and a new benchmark time for the legendary 'Ouninpohja' stage!

"Today's WRC gravel tyres have to be so versatile. They need to deliver grip, performance, strength and durability as a function of the different characteristics of the eight rounds that take place on dirt. I believe that speaks volumes for what the engineers at Michelin Motorsport have achieved. On top of that, despite the high average speeds and stage times, very little wear was noted, even after competitive loops of up to 80km in length."

A maiden one-two-three finish in WRC2 for the MICHELIN LATITUDE Cross S80

The new MICHELIN LATITUDE Cross H90 (hard compound) and S80 (soft) for WRC2 competitors made their maiden World Rally Championship appearance in Poland at the beginning of July.

The Latitude Cross H90 and S80 were specially designed to match the technical characteristics of the R5 cars which are less demanding of their tyres than the World Rally Cars. The new tyres are more agile and represent a performance gain of up to seven-tenths of a second per kilometre compared with their predecessors.



In Poland, these two new Michelin tyres contributed to the one-two success of Skoda Fabia R5 crews Esapekka Lappi/Janne Ferme and Pontus Tidemand/Emil Axelsson, even though only seven of the 27 WRC2 cars there were competing on the French firm's rubber.

In Finland, Michelin had 12 partners in the class and the soft-compound MICHELIN LATITUDE Cross S80 monopolised the podium for the first time this year thanks to the same two factory Skoda crews and to the Franco-Belgian pairing of Stéphane Lefebvre/Stéphane Prévot (DS3 R5).

Says **Jacques Morelli**, manager of Michelin's FIA WRC programme: "The new MICHELIN LATITUDE Cross H90 and S80 tyres we have developed for WRC2 have shown how competitive they are in this fiercely fought class where our partners form a minority. The competitiveness of the S80, which was the preferred choice throughout this year's Neste Oil Rally Finland 2015, is the fruit of the work of Michelin Motorsport's engineers. They have achieved the ideal balance between outright speed and longevity."

With the exception of their tread pattern, the MICHELIN Latitude Cross H90 and S80 feature a high number of evolutions, including a more flexible crown and side walls. As a result, the WRC2 runners are able to use a softer compound than their WRC colleagues, while the contact patch is larger in order to help combat the phenomenon of wear.

The MICHELIN LTX Force (S4 and H4) and MICHELIN Latitude Cross (H90 and S80)

Size: 205/65R15 (equivalent to 17/65-15)

Width: 205mm

Sidewall height: 133 mm

Interior diameter: 15 inches

Type of pattern: directional and asymmetric (a left-hand and a right-hand tyre)

Surface types: dirt and non-sealed roads

'H4' and 'H90' versions (hard compound): aggressive, hard-wearing dirt / dry conditions / temperature >15°C

'S4' and 'S80' versions (soft compound): wet or damp dirt / temperature <15°C

Round 9 of the 2015 FIA World Rally Championship will be the ADAC Rallye Deutschland (August 20-23) which is based in Trier, Germany. It will be the season's second asphalt clash and Michelin will have two new tyres for its partners: the MICHELIN Pilot Sport H5 (hard compound) and the MICHELIN Pilot Sport S5 (soft). A press release detailing the characteristics of these two new tyres will be published soon.