



**2015 FIA World Rally Championship
VODAFONE RALLY DE PORTUGAL**

**The MICHELIN LTX Force S4 triumphs,
even used beyond its recommended limits**

The 2015 Vodafone Rally de Portugal ended today (Sunday, May 24th) in Porto with a one-two-three finish for Volkswagen Motorsport topped by Latvala/Anttila (N°2 Polo R WRC) who led from after SS4 to the finish. Second were Ogier/Ingrassia (N°1 Polo R WRC) who were handicapped by 'road-sweeping' duty, and Mikkelsen/Floene (N°9 Polo R WRC) who continue to progress.

Although the final result suggests that the VW trio dominated proceedings, the 2015 Vodafone Rally de Portugal provided a particularly thrilling fight and the German team's opponents did not make life easy for the world champions. Rally Argentina winners Kris Meeke and Paul Nagle (N°3 DS3 WRC, Citroën Total Abu Dhabi WRT) ran in second place up to the end of Day 2, for example, while Hyundai Motorsport's Sordo/Marti (N°8 Hyundai i20 WRC) and M-Sport's Tanak/Molder (N°6 Ford Fiesta RS WRC) entertained with a great battle in the immediate wake of the front-runners.

Michelin had a positive week in Portugal to celebrate the event's move back to the north of the country after a decade in the Algarve. For the French tyre firm, it was a return to a terrain that had already seen it reap 13 victories since the FIA World Rally Championship's creation in 1973.

The prospect of high temperatures and the pitfalls inherent in the region's stages – which featured softer ground but also buried stones that were dug up with each passing car – led Michelin to nominate the hard-compound MICHELIN LTX Force H4 as the preferred choice for the event. In spite of this recommendation on safety grounds, the teams chose to opt for outright performance by favouring the soft 'S4' version of tyre, only 16 of which were available per driver for the entire event.

Given that numbers of the 'soft' tyre were limited, crews had to manage their respective stocks carefully. This led to different strategies during the rally's first two days as they switched between the two options in order to have sufficient 'soft' MICHELIN LTX Force S4s for the short final leg.

"The MICHELIN LTX Force S4 delivered impeccable performance from start to finish, even though the competitors used this choice beyond our recommendations," observes **Jacques Morelli**, manager of Michelin's WRC programme. "The 'soft' version wasn't designed for competing on stages heated by the sun to temperatures of around 35°C! Even so, the S4's performance was exceptional and wear-rates, although high, never exceeded the limits. Another positive from the week was the soft compound's outstanding resistance to the punishment. That's exactly what the MICHELIN Total Performance philosophy is all about: maximum performance combined with resistance to damage in extreme conditions. As a result, the drivers were able to focus on their driving instead of being obsessed by steering clear of the stones..."

The other outings for the soft-compound MICHELIN LTX Force S4 as the nominated tyre this year will be Poland, Finland and Wales GB where the weather is unlikely to be as hot as it was this week in Portugal!



The MICHELIN LTX Force (H4 and S4 versions)

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

Width: 205mm

Sidewall height: 133mm

Interior diameter: 15 inches

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

Weight: 16.4kg

Surface types: dirt and non-sealed roads

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

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

'H4' events: Mexico, Portugal, Italy, Australia and Spain

'S4' events: Argentina, Poland, Finland and Wales GB

The MICHELIN LTX Force H4 and S4 tyres for the Rally de Portugal

Total number of tyres available for the Vodafone Rally de Portugal: 1650 (WRC + WRC2: 980 / JWRC: 670)

Number of tyres each World Rally Car driver can use: 24 (four per tyre-change opportunity [five] + four additional tyres)

Total stage length: 351.71 kilometres (16 stages)

Total route length (including road sections): 1,526.16 kilometres

Tyre quota per World Rally Car driver:

- 24 x MICHELIN LTX Force H4s
- 16 x MICHELIN LTX Force S4s

Michelin's staff in Portugal

Michelin's partners will be able to count on a staff of 14 in Porto:

- 1 manager
- 4 Michelin technical team advisors
- 2 coordinators
- 7 fitters