

2019 FIA World Rally Championship
Round 5: Xion Rally Argentina

The MICHELIN LTX Force M6 is ideal ally for the WRC stars in Argentina

The 2019 Rally Argentina – the second gravel fixture of this year’s World Rally Championship, after Rally Mexico – produced yet another thrilling battle between the WRC’s main title contenders, as well as in the WRC2 class.

The South American round took place in the Villa Carlos Paz region (around 700 kilometres northwest of Buenos Aires) and kicked off in wet weather before the return of sunshine saw the thermometer climb to more than 20°C from Saturday afternoon onwards, including for Sunday’s high-altitude stages like Copina-El Cóndor. This Rally Argentina classic – which takes crews to an altitude of more than 2,100 metres above sea level – served as the Power Stage to wrap up the week’s action.

To cope with the demands made by Rally Argentina varied stages, Michelin provided its WRC partners with a choice between the medium-compound MICHELIN LTX Force M6 and the harder MICHELIN LTX Force H4, while its WRC2 runners were able to opt for either the MICHELIN Latitude Cross S80 (soft) or the MICHELIN Latitude Cross H90 (hard). In both classes, the softer alternative (LTX Force M6 and Latitude Cross S80) proved the chief choice practically throughout as the drivers took advantage of its strong casing and grip performance to entertain the huge crowds despite the weekend’s hostile conditions.

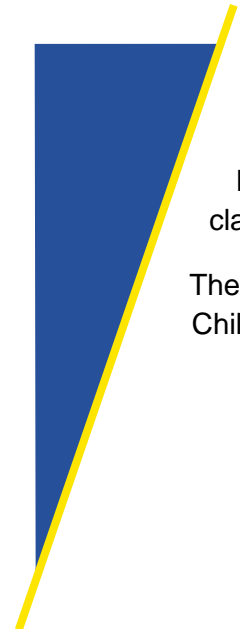
“This year’s Rally Argentina lived up to its promise in terms not only of the challenge it represented but also the show it delivered,” reports **Arnaud Rémy**, the manager of Michelin’s rally programmes. “The morning stages were extremely slippery due to the rain and tended to cut up for the afternoon loops. These conditions called for a combination of bravery and confidence in order to be able to push to the limit as the drivers did from start to finish. I would like to congratulate our technical staff. The tyres they designed for the WRC blend outstanding sidewall strength and grip performance and allowed the drivers to push without the fear of losing air pressure or suffering a pinch puncture. I have seen plenty of photos of drivers performing spectacular leaps and, in many cases, landing on one wheel. Every time, the tyre in the firing line fulfilled its role and enabled the drivers to keep pushing. When you see the depth of the ruts and impacts that the MICHELIN LTX Force’s sidewalls were subjected to, it is clear that our tyres were ideal allies for the WRC drivers in Argentina, especially as the number of cases of pressure loss that were reported were very low given the conditions and distances involved.”

Spectator numbers were estimated to be close to one million and fans was treated to a superb battle which was ultimately won by Thierry Neuville/Nicolas Gilsoul, ahead of their Hyundai i20 Coupé WRC team-mates Andreas Mikkelsen/Anders Jaeger. Sébastien Ogier/Julien Ingrassia (Citroën C3 WRC) clinched third spot on the final stage to make it an all-Michelin podium.



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The WRC2 win went to Mads Ostberg/Torstein Eriksen (Citroën C3 R5), ahead of Pedro Heller/Marc Martí (Ford Fiesta R5) who earned a one-two finish for Michelin in the class which features open competition between tyre manufacturers.

The next round of the 2019 FIA World Rally Championship (May 9-12) will take teams to Chile for the very first time.

