

# PIRELLI READY FOR A RALLY FINLAND WITH A TWIST

- WRC's fastest stages return with a new date
- Autumn brings potential for cold, damp, and wet surfaces
- Soft compound the first choice for maximum grip

*Milan, September 28, 2021* – The FIA World Rally Championship drivers may face a different challenge than usual when they return to the fast forest roads of Rally Finland for the first time in more than two years, with a later autumn date set to bring cooler and potentially wetter conditions. Whatever the weather, they can count on Pirelli's Scorpion tyres to provide grip and stability over the championship's fastest stages on gravel: at the most recent Rally Finland (held in 2019) the highest average speed was 131.77 kph, set by Kris Meeke on SS10, Aankoski 2.

## **The Pirelli tyres in Finland**

Scorpion KX: Pirelli's gravel rally tyre comes in hard and soft compounds. In Finland, the soft will be the first choice to provide grip in cool or damp conditions. The hard will also be available as an alternative, providing longevity across multiple stages. In both compounds, the tyre features additional reinforcement, particularly in the sidewall.

Scorpion K: Pirelli's gravel tyres for WRC 2 and WRC 3 also come in hard and soft compounds, and feature many of the characteristics of the KX fitted to the top cars.

## **Pirelli quote**

Terenzio Testoni, rally activity manager: "Although Rally Finland is a very familiar test in the WRC, the conditions this year could be quite different because of the later date. In the summer when the rally is usually held, the ambient temperatures can be very high, and this combined with the high speeds and the big jumps can provide many stresses for the tyres: which also need to be reliable and comfortable to cope. This time, the greatest challenge could be to find grip in the cool temperatures: especially if there is a lot of rain and the roads become very slippery. For this reason, the soft tyre will be the clear main choice to provide the drivers with the traction and confidence they need to attack on such fast roads, where mistakes can cost a lot of time. It's going to be interesting to see how the soft Scorpion tyres cope with cold conditions for the first time, given that the weather forecast predicts temperatures between five and 10 degrees centigrade."

## **Pirelli in numbers**

Pirelli will bring around 1300 tyres to Finland, of which 400 will be for the top class of World Rally Cars.

Each of the WRC drivers can use up to 28 tyres during the rally, (including shakedown tyres). For the rally, each car has a total allocation of:

- 28 Scorpion KX Soft
- 8 Scorpion KX Hard

Pirelli will also supply 900 tyres to the other four-wheel drive cars in the event, including those entered in WRC 2 and WRC 3:

- 26 Scorpion K6A Soft
- 8 Scorpion K4A Hard
- Again, there is a separate allocation of four tyres for shakedown

## **The big number**

70. This will be the 70th running of Rally Finland, which actually started as an autumn event in September 1951. Back then it was known as the Jyväskylän Suurajot, or the Jyväskylä Grand Prix. Today the rally is still known affectionally as the ‘Gravel Grand Prix’ or the ‘Finnish Grand Prix’, such is its significance in motorsport.

## **Why tyre strategy matters**

The expected autumnal conditions mean the soft tyre is likely to be the most popular choice in Finland but getting the most out of every tyre will be important – especially with loops of over 70 kilometres to be completed on a single set of tyres on Saturday. The rally runs to a more compact format this year: the start is at Friday lunchtime with a total of 19 stages: some run in darkness.

## **What to look out for**

Flying Finns. Historically, drivers from Finland have dominated their home event. Local stars to have won Rally Finland on Pirelli tyres include Markku Alen, Ari Vatanen, Juha Kankkunen and Marcus Gronholm, as well as Mikko Hirvonen and Jari-Matti Latvala who won in 2009 and 2010 during the Italian company’s previous stint as exclusive tyre supplier to the WRC’s top category. Esapekka Lappi, who won Rally Finland for Toyota in 2017, will drive a privately-entered Yaris on the event, while former M-Sport driver Teemu Suninen makes his debut in a Volkswagen Polo R5. Other Pirelli-equipped local stars include Teemu Asunmaa and Mikko Heikkila, both driving the latest Skoda Fabia Rally 2.