

Rally Finland: Preview

Toyota Yaris WRC trio ready for flat-out Finnish push

TOYOTA GAZOO Racing World Rally Team will take on the high-speed gravel roads of Rally Finland (July 26-29) with the clear aim of repeating its victory from last year. The rally is a home event for the team, which has a base close to the service park in Jyväskylä, as well as for its Finnish drivers Jari-Matti Latvala and Esapekka Lappi, while Ott Tänak can also count on large support from neighbouring Estonia.



Yaris WRC Car 9

Rally Finland is the fastest event on the WRC calendar, played out on smooth gravel roads through the forests. The stages feature many large jumps and numerous crests, where accurate pace-notes and the positioning of the car are crucial. The high speeds mean that time differences are smaller than usual, and mistakes are more easily punished.

This year, Rally Finland features a heavily-revised route with almost 65 percent of it different to 2017, and nearly 40 percent on roads that are new to the rally. It begins on Thursday evening with the mixed-surface Harju stage in Jyväskylä itself, before a total of 10 stages on Friday held mostly to the west. Saturday consists of eight stages to the south-east near Jämsä, totalling 142.86 kilometres. There are four further stages on Sunday, with Ruuhimäki as the rally-closing Power Stage.

Quotes:

Tommi Mäkinen (Team Principal)

"This is an exciting event for everybody in the team, especially with the fantastic support that we receive from the fans in Finland, and I am sure that many will come from Estonia to cheer for Ott too. It was very special for us to win the rally last year: our aim is to do the same this time. We know that the Yaris WRC is strong on these types of roads, and all three of our drivers feel confident on these fast stages. I hope that they can all be fighting for the victory. We are very well-prepared, but I think we will face strong competition from our rivals."



Jari-Matti Latvala and Miikka Anttila

Jari-Matti Latvala (Driver car 7)

"I am really looking forward to Rally Finland. It is a good opportunity to start the second half of the season in a positive way. I have always felt really good support on my home event, and this is even more the case now that we are driving a car that has been built here. I could really feel last year that everybody was behind the team and willing us on. One of the big challenges this year will be the changes to the route. I have driven some of the new roads before, but it was a long time ago and there are large sections that even I don't know. Therefore, I think it will actually create a more level playing field."



Ott Tänak and Martin Järveoja

Ott Tänak (Driver car 8)

"Rally Finland is always one of my favourite events. It is quite a specific rally: really high-speed but also quite technical with the jumps. You really need to have some respect for the roads there. This year there will be a lot of new roads that we have not seen before, which will add to the challenge. I think we have had some really good preparation. As well as our pre-event testing, I took part in Rally Estonia last weekend and won it, which was quite nice in front of so many fans. I am sure that a few of them will go to Rally Finland as well, and I hope we can give them a good result there too."



Esapekka Lappi and Janne Ferm

Esapekka Lappi (Driver car 9)

"Rally Finland is always a special event and even more so after our victory last year. I am really looking forward to it. There is more pressure this year. From my side, I am expecting a good result and I think everyone else is too, so we really need to perform. I think it will be tougher to win it this time, though. The competition will be tougher, both from inside our team and from the other teams as well. The new stages will also create a big challenge. We know that our car will be competitive so the focus will be on making good pace-notes and finding a nice flow with the driving."

The statistics (Rally Finland):

Year	Jari-Matti Latvala	Ott Tänak	Esapekka Lappi
2017	21	7	1
2016	2	DNF	8
2015	1	5	8
2014	1	12	-
2013	17	-	31
2012	3	6	25

What happened last year?

Esapekka Lappi claimed the first win of his FIA World Rally Championship career and the second victory for Toyota since its return to the sport. Lappi was involved in a close battle with his team-mate Jari-Matti Latvala during the first half of the rally, before Latvala had to stop with an electrical issue. Juho Hänninen finished third to achieve the first double podium for the Yaris WRC.



Rally Finland 2017

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