



FEDERATION INTERNATIONALE DE L'AUTOMOBILE

2016 FIA WORLD RALLY CHAMPIONSHIP

RALLYE DEUTSCHLAND

Post event Press Conference
21 August 2016

Present:

1st - Sébastien Ogier, Volkswagen Motorsport
1st - Julien Ingrassia, Volkswagen Motorsport
2nd - Dani Sordo, Hyundai Motorsport
2nd - Marc Marti, Hyundai Motorsport
3rd - Thierry Neuville, Hyundai Motorsport
3rd - Nicolas Gilsoul, Hyundai Motorsport
Jost Capito, Volkswagen Motorsport

Q:

Welcome back, Sébastien, to the top step of the podium. Your first win since Sweden this year. How good does it feel to be in that middle seat now?

SO:

Yes, it is great, really great. I think I am going to enjoy the next days, the next weeks. Unfortunately, we don't go to China, so I have plenty of time to enjoy this one, and I will, because it is no secret that I am having a tough time this season and this is a really good place to do it, because it is the home rally from our team and the last rally from Jost. We promised him to do our best to try to finish in style. That fits to these four fantastic years we had together. We have had so much success, so maybe it had to finish like this.

Q:

It is a special win for you and I am sure it is for Jost as well, but it has been an exciting battle. There was you, there was Andreas Mikkelsen, Thierry, Dani, there were so many of you in the mix there. It must have been good to be back in the fight.

SO:

Exactly. More than the pleasure of the victory was the pleasure we had about the race by battling with three other guys. The battle was intense, it was tight for most of the weekend, except for Baumholder where we really made the difference, but the rest of the stages were very close. I think that is what people want to see in rallying as well. We enjoy it, but I am sure that a lot of people have enjoyed to watch this race throughout the weekend. I received a lot of messages from friends, saying: 'it is such a very cool race, I like it, keep going'. Another proof that when we can fight in not too different conditions, it is even better.

Q:

It was fascinating to watch, because everyone along the way seemed to be making some little mistakes. Tyre choices were difficult this weekend, especially yesterday, but yesterday afternoon was where it really all came together for you.

SO:

Yes, it was a proper Rallye Deutschland with proper 'Deutsch' weather. It was extremely difficult to make the tyre choice. Most of the time we had a good compromise, but never really the perfect choice. But the most important thing was that we had a solution that kept us going with good speed. Like last year, and like we discussed before the start, the difference

happened at Panzerplatte. Most of the time it happens here. It is so demanding for the tyres. It looks like one of my strengths here is to manage the tyres a little bit better than my rivals on this stage. If you look at the speed to the end, it was there that I made the difference, so that was definitely important to have it, because then I could finish it today a bit more relaxed, although even this morning I forgot a little bit to put my wake-up call. When I saw Dani's time on the first stage, I lied a bit to Julien that it was okay, but it was more than I wanted, for sure.

Q:

Julien, you told us in Portugal, at the post-event press conference, that your grandmother was very disappointed that you hadn't won a rally for a long time. I am really pleased now that you go home and tell her that you finally won again. How are you feeling at the end of the rally?

JL:

I will be happy to speak to her again, because since six months she hasn't spoken to me! Actually, I have made a list of things I wanted to talk about, but you talked about my grandmother, and she is not on that list... Well, first of all, I want to say that I am happy that Stéphane and Gabin are okay after a huge crash. Just hang on and it will be difficult for Gabin for a few months, but I am happy for them that they are okay. I started this weekend with Anders, Mikkelsen's co-driver, who was wearing an orange t-shirt with my head as a picture printed on it with ears like a rabbit, so I was the target. He was trying to shoot me... I also want to thank our gravel crew, because it was very difficult to choose the tyres, as Séb said, but also to give us the confidence in the pace notes to attack and to stay on the road. A great job again. Also a little thought for Jari-Matti. I don't know if you saw it, but at the final service we had a cake for Jost as a present, and Jari-Matti took his revenge and put the cake into his face, but it was quite a strong move so I thought his nose was broken. But what Jari-Matti doesn't know is that it is still in function, so I hear that Jari-Matti is fired! And to Jost, many thanks, it has been a nice four years with you. I wanted to sing something, but better not.

Q:

Dani, that final stage, taking second position by a tenth of a second, the smallest margin! That must have been very satisfying. How did you feel when you saw the time?

DS:

I was a little bit sad, because Thierry was fast. No, to be honest, I was happy. All week it was great, we were fighting for a podium. In the end, we started really strong today and we took second position, but it was close with Thierry. Maybe I need to push a little bit more, because he did a really good stage, but he was fast. At the end, one tenth was a position.

Q:

Did you drive your absolute maximum? Were you completely flat out?

DS:

I tried to do my best. Maybe we lost a little bit of time at the beginning because it was bumpy and we had our problem with the suspension from the morning, so I didn't want to break everything, but, of course, I did my best.

Q:

Talk to me a little bit more in general then about the weekend and your performance? Yesterday, we saw you really trying to get to that podium. You were getting close then you were losing a little bit of time. How do you feel in general about your performance this weekend?

DS:

Yes, I was happy. I prefer to fight a little bit more with Sébastien. He also did a very good job with the tyres, yesterday, he got a big gap, so he managed it really well, but with Thierry and with Andreas, it was nice. I do my best. Maybe in some places we didn't do very well with the tyres, but for everybody it was the same problem. Also maybe the first and the second day

were a little bit more difficult with the road position. It was dirty in some places, but at the end, we took second place.

Q:

Marc, it is a busy rally for co-drivers as well. A lot of notes to get out for you, with the gravel crew, the stages, how did it all work for you this weekend? Was it a successful relationship with the gravel crews?

MM:

Yes, of course, it is very important to have this relationship. We have a very good team with Pablo and Keke, we have known them for a very long time and we know them very well. This rally we had a lot of confidence with them. This is a really difficult rally with conditions changing all the time. We know that information keeps us updated and gives us a lot of confidence to drive as fast as we can.

Q:

You are the man who gets the time first when you come through the stages. What did you think when you saw the time and realised you got second by just a tenth of a second?

MM:

Of course, it was really great. Three years ago we lost one fourth place in Monte Carlo by one tenth against Thierry and Nicolas. As drivers, you never know, but I am really happy with Dani's consistency throughout the rally. We were driving as fast as we can, but carefully. I think we didn't make any mistakes and we are happy with this second position.

Q:

Thierry, you are on the podium, which is a great result. We were watching, everyone was watching, on the power stage. You stood there and watched Dani come through. We could see the disappointment in your face. By just a tenth of a second you missed out on second. How disappointing was it for you? How frustrating, and did you know in your mind where that tenth of a second was?

TN:

I think everybody could listen, four letters I shouted at that moment, because Nicolas came to me and said: he can't be quicker than this time. If not, he is faster than us. And then I saw him approaching the line and I thought that we were okay, but he was faster. We were just disappointed. I really tried to give everything during that stage. I knew it was going to be nearly impossible to catch three seconds in that stage, especially during all our fights this weekend. Somehow, I knew I had done a very good stage. When I saw the time of Andreas as well, I said, maybe it is possible. And finally, disappointed, but on the other hand it is a good feeling as well because it was a good weekend. A few rallies in a row in which we have good results. Always missing out by small margins on a podium or, like here, on second place, but we are back in the fight, which is nice.

Q:

What did you find the toughest challenge out there this weekend?

TN:

I don't know, but it was the first time I have made many mistakes here in Germany. Normally, I don't do many mistakes here, I know the stages very well, I feel comfortable, but this weekend it was the weather conditions and sometimes I was pushing a bit too much and I was overdriving. I went wide a couple of times and that is where I lost most of the time. Otherwise, we could have been in the fight for the win. We had the power steering problem as well, I lost 10 seconds there. Still a good weekend for us, it could have been worse. So, to answer your question, weather conditions were the most difficult and the tyre choice wasn't easy at all.

Q:

I am sure keeping focus on the rally is difficult when all the journalists are asking you before the event where you are going to be next year, because it is that time of the season, but now

the event is done, you can talk about it freely if you want. No pressure on your shoulders now.

TN:

No, not at all. As Jost [Capito] is leaving, maybe the new boss likes me a bit more and will offer me a seat, I don't know. No, it's a joke. I am actually focussed on my races so far, like I said before. For me, the main goal is to come back competitive after all the trouble we have had so far in the beginning of the year and at the end of last year. Negotiations are much easier when you are competitive, so I am waiting for the offers.

Q:

Are you waiting for offers, are you talking to people?

TN:

Yes, for sure, my management is working. No more information.

Q:

When will we know?

TN:

We will see.

Q:

Nico, congratulations. We saw that tension at the stage end. I know you missed out on second, but getting on the podium is a great result-

NG:

Yes, for sure. For me it has been a very positive weekend. It was an intense battle, all four of us, with Andreas and Anders. That is something very interesting, because the battle was very close altogether. It has been a challenging event with changing weather all the time, tricky road conditions. We were very quick, sometimes slightly too quick, but at the end we are back on the podium, so I am very happy with this.

Q:

There is obviously the extra work for you guys when you are communicating with the gravel crews. They are the unsung heroes, getting up early, going out, getting the information to you. Did that work well this weekend?

NG:

Yes, and it is even more difficult with the bad network with the cell phone in Germany. You get exhausted all the time, but it worked quite well. Our gravel crew did an amazing job, so thanks to them.

Q:

Jost, Séb has said that he wanted to deliver a win on your final event here in Germany. He has certainly done that, it is great to see him back on the top step of the podium. How do you feel now that it is coming to a close here at the Rallye Deutschland, your time within the WRC?

JC:

First I have to thank Séb and Julien for delivering on their promise. Really good and nice on them. I would have loved to sit here with all my boys, like last year, but I think the six guys sitting here are fantastic sportsmen, great drivers and co-drivers, and they deserve to be on the podium, they did a fantastic job and I am happy to sit here with them. On one hand, I am happy that Jari-Matti is not here, because he would have told so much that there would be nothing left for me! That's a revenge for the cake. I had great times here in the press conferences. I remember when Julien [Ingrassia] was there with the cross-county skis in Sweden, and also when I was sitting beside Nicolas [Gilsoul] and I fell asleep and he woke me up, saying that it was my time now. That was in Sardinia two years ago. These are nice memories from here. I have to thank the whole rally community, all the media, the journalists, the photographers, the TV crew, all the teams and all the drivers, but especially all the fans around the world. They made us and the team the most fantastic four years we have had in

our lives. It is really hard to go, but my job is done, like when your child becomes an adult and leaves home. You still care, but they have to find their own feet. I am convinced it is the right time now. The team can be successful. We did a great job on the '17 car and we did everything right that it can be successful. We had a fantastic experience, a fantastic journey. Without you [the media], it would never have been this kind of a journey. It was more than a dream coming true. I will really miss it, but I think when I hear all the discussions and my brother sends me all the Twitter comments, some people may also be happy that I am leaving now. I will stay in touch and I will always follow rally, because for me this is the best motorsport that is around. And I will make the Formula 1 paddock all huge rally fans, I promise!

Q:

You have brought so much to the WRC over your time with Volkswagen and your time with Ford. What can you take from WRC to F1?

JC:

Rallying is very professional, but it is also fun. Many people believe that enjoying the job and being professional and successful don't align, can't go together, but I think that in rallying we have proven that it even enhances the success if you are enjoying your job and if you have fun. In England, they say: work hard, play hard, and that is what I can bring to Formula 1, and I hope I can bring some of it to F1 because I think the rally community is really unique and outstanding, and every sport can take something from rallying.

FIA WRC 2 CHAMPIONSHIP

Present:

1st - Esapekka Lappi, Škoda Motorsport

1st - Janne Ferm, Škoda Motorsport

Q:

Esapekka, a great win here on tarmac. We saw nice little battles with you and Armin Kremer this weekend, but you came out very much on top. This is a good win for your championship.

EL:

I agree. It looked quite bad on Friday, I was struggling in the vineyards, but we recovered well on Saturday and today, it was more or less controlling all the time.

Q:

You said on Friday that you knew in your mind that the vineyards were going to be difficult for you and Saturday was where you were going to get your time back. Why did you find the vineyard stages so difficult?

EL:

I am not so used to driving on dirty tarmac or tarmac where there is a lot of gravel. These are the conditions in which I am struggling. I have to learn more. Maybe it was a mistake of my brain, you know, that I was thinking that it was difficult and for sure it was difficult, because I was thinking like that, so next year I need to think that it is going to be really easy.

Q:

Talk to me about Saturday, because that was where we saw you start to take the time to get into the lead. How comfortable did you feel on the stages, especially at Panzerplatte, that big long stage?

EL:

We only managed to do it once. That was one of the most difficult ones in a way. We started with full softs, and it was 85 percent dry. We never did that in testing, such long mileage on aggressive surface with a soft compound. I had no idea with the tyre management, how long it would last. I did it really carefully. In the end it worked well and the time was okay, but it was very difficult. On the other stages that were wet or damp, the tyre choice was good all

the time. The grip was good as well. The cuts and the mud were in our pace notes already. In a way, the times came a bit easily.

Q:

The championship is really interesting in WRC 2. How are you feeling with your hopes in the rallies that you have remaining?

EL:

Everything is possible, but, to be honest, I am not thinking about it too much. Some people here in the room are thinking about that. I just want to do one event at a time and concentrate on that. No matter what the result is. I don't think about the championship too much. If it comes, it comes, and if it doesn't come, then I don't care. It doesn't change my future.

Q:

You mention a key word there: future. What is happening with Esapekka Lappi next year? We hear all kinds of rumours about you testing for Toyota. Is there anything you can tell us?

EL:

There are many things I can tell, but they are not related to motorsport. There are rumours, yes. I can say that I never drive any WRC car, but I have been in the workshop. So that is where the rumours come from, I guess. I visited the Toyota workshop.

Q:

So are you talking to the team about next year then?

EL:

Yes.

Q:

And that will be the hope, to be with Toyota next year?

EL:

It is one option.

Q:

When will we know, do you think?

EL:

You don't have to ask me, you have to ask the team bosses.

Q:

Janne, as I mentioned, it is a tarmac round. As a co-driver, how difficult was it for you out there?

JF:

It is one of the toughest events on the calendar. All the dirt, especially when the rain came. We don't have the gravel crew, so it is more or less a prediction if a corner is muddy or not. Then Esapekka says a few words, and in the second run, we probably have them. It was a great victory here. Esapekka did a great job over here, we are very pleased to be here.

Q:

Esapekka always seems a cool and calm customer. Is that the truth in the car? Does he get stressed?

JF:

No, never. He is a very calm person inside the car as well, very focussed.

Q:

I always ask drivers when they get a win, does it add to their confidence, but I never really ask co-drivers. Does it give you more confidence moving forward when you do get a victory?

JF:

For sure, I am a human being as well. I am not a computer.

Q:

And what about the rest of the season ahead? WRC 2 is a fantastic battle and it normally goes right till the end of the season. Are you prepared for that?

JF:

Yes, we are prepared. Let's bring it on!

FIA JUNIOR WRC / WRC 3 CHAMPIONSHIP

Present:

1st – Simone Tempestini,

1st – Giovanni Bernacchini

Q:

Simone, you are leading the Junior WRC Championship standings. A great win for you here on German tarmac. How are you feeling?

ST:

Yes, this is a really good win. I am really happy for this result. Rallye Deutschland was very hard because of the weather conditions that changed a lot: sometimes, it was dry and sometimes, it was wet. There was a lot of cutting as well, so the road was really dirty. We did our best and we finished in first position. The rhythm was quite good, so we are happy with it.

Q:

You mentioned the weather conditions; it has been challenging but you were obviously getting your tyre choices right.

ST:

Yes, for me it really was a perfect week, because we already did very good work during the recce and during the rally, I was never surprised by any corners that I didn't expect. The tyre choice was really good, every time I felt well with them.

Q:

What did you find the most challenging here? Was it the vineyard stages that were really technical, or was it yesterday with the long Panzerplatte stage? What was the toughest part of the rally for you?

ST:

For me it was a bit harder on the first day, because there were really strange stages with different characteristics, typical for this rally. At Panzerplatte I had a good feeling and I tried to push a bit. It was a nice stage for me where we were able to make the gap a little bit bigger. Today, it was a perfect day. The stages were beautiful.

Q:

The gap is looking good in the championship standings right now, how confident are you feeling now after this win?

ST:

This win was very important for the championship. We still have two rounds left, but we can go there to enjoy the stages and driving a little bit more. We will be very concentrated and will try to do our best there as well, but maybe we can be a little bit more relaxed.

Q:

Giovanni. It has been a tough event: weather conditions, dealing with the tyres, for co-drivers, you have got so much information to get out in short spaces of time. A tough event for you guys, too?

GB:

Yes, Germany is one of the most difficult rallies on tarmac, especially this weekend, on which the weather conditions weren't perfect. For the JWRC drivers it is not allowed to have a

gravel crew, so it was almost a gamble to find a good choice for the tyres, but we did a very good job this weekend. Like Simone said, it wasn't easy at all, but for us, victory here is very important for the championship. So it was difficult, but we are very happy now with this result.

Q:

We haven't got much of the season left and as you said, it is an important win at this point in the season. It gives you a good amount of confidence moving forward?

GB:

It probably is a crucial victory here, but you can never say what can happen in the future. Before coming here our expectation was to do a good result and finish on the podium, but now with the victory the situation is very important. We are still keeping our fingers crossed, but we make another step towards winning the championship, although there are still two rallies to go.