



FEDERATION INTERNATIONALE DE L'AUTOMOBILE

2017 FIA WORLD RALLY CHAMPIONSHIP

ADAC RALLYE DEUTSCHLAND

Post event Press Conference
20 August 2017

Present:

1st - Ott Tänak, M-Sport World Rally Team
1st - Martin Järveoja, M-Sport World Rally Team
2nd - Andreas Mikkelsen, Citroën Total Abu Dhabi World Rally Team
2nd - Anders Jæger, Citroën Total Abu Dhabi World Rally Team
3rd - Sébastien Ogier, M-Sport World Rally Team
3rd - Julien Ingrassia, M-Sport World Rally Team
Malcolm Wilson, Team Principal, M-Sport World Rally Team

Q:

Ott, it is your second WRC victory, it is a win on tarmac at the ADAC Rallye Deutschland which M-Sport has never won before. How do you feel?

OT:

It has been a great weekend and it is a great feeling. It was a tricky event which started in a very difficult way with extreme weather conditions and a lot of dirt on the road. We took a brave tyre decision which everybody on the team fought me for, but it worked out very well. The tyre decision decided the whole rally I would say.

Q:

Most of the rally was basically mistake-free for you?

OT:

The conditions were improving a lot after the rain. There was much more grip and it was much more enjoyable to drive.

Q:

We have seen a very confident Ott Tänak. Is this because you got your first WRC win already out your way? Did you feel less pressure?

OT:

For sure it is helping a bit. But the most important thing was the first drive through the long Panzerplatte stage where I managed to keep up with Seb [Ogier]. So I felt a bit more comfortable. He was pretty fast there before. But after this we managed to keep the pace up.

Q:

We thought you were going for more bonus points in the Power Stage. Was that going through your mind?

OT:

Not really. We are in this position in the championship where we need to collect all the points and it was very important to get these points. So I had to be smart this time. Let's get some more experience so we can also start to push in these situations, but this time we needed to be safe.

Q:

How do you feel about your chances in the 2017 Championship?

OT:

It is never over before it is over. We managed to get closer to the two guys in front of us. It is three rallies to go and the gap is not too big, so let's see what happens. We try to do our best job and it will be interesting at the end of the season.

Q:

Martin, the victory here is probably one of the best 30th birthday presents that you can get. How does it feel?

MJ:

The feeling is great. Thank you, Ott, for this present. It is always difficult to win on tarmac rallies with all these pace notes and especially so on Friday with the challenging weather conditions. In the end it was a perfect weekend for us.

Q:

The conditions on Friday were tough. How did you make it through there?

MJ:

We made a good tyre choice. That was the key to our win here in Germany.

Q:

Andreas, brilliant result on tarmac here in Germany. You must be feeling good with P2?

AM:

I feel great. When I saw the weather forecast coming into the rally I was sure I would not have a chance. Starting so far back on day one was really a challenge. But luckily I really enjoy the vineyard stages. By now I feel at home on these stages. So I pushed really, really hard because we knew that the weather would be better on day two and three. Our objective was to stay close to Ott which we did. The other days were also a challenge with small mistakes but I finally mastered the long Panzerplatte so our preparations paid off. So we are really happy to deliver this second place – for us but also for Citroën.

Q:

How much did you feel the pressure from Ogier sitting in P3?

AM:

Last year we were leading the rally going into the Panzerplatte stage. Then we lost 14 and 16 seconds on each run through. I knew that when he was four seconds behind me going into Panzerplatte I knew I needed to go for it because he was so much faster. But we managed to take some time out of Seb and this was the deciding moment.

Q:

This was an important result for Citroën but also for you. You said that Germany was your final event for Citroën. Do you have an update on whether you will appear in one of the remaining events this season?

AM:

I hope to do all the events. The important thing for me now is to find a place where we can fight for the championship next year. If this is for Citroën or not, I don't know. But I have done three rallies with them and I enjoyed them. So let's see if there are some more.

Q:

Anders, a tough weekend but a great result for you as well?

AJ:

We were excited for this event, considering our last tarmac event was Spain last year. Germany is not an easy tarmac rally. To be able to perform on this level in difficult conditions like on Friday and then to continue doing it is a confirmation for us that we are where we think we are. And to give Citroën a second place here we have to thank the team for a perfect car throughout this event. We are for sure very satisfied with this result.

Q:

It all worked out with the route note crews during the rally?

AJ:

Of course, when you start way back in the field like we did here, it is sometimes hard to really trust the information that you get from the crews because so many cars have already been through the stages. But they did an amazing job which is important to succeed in a rally like this.

Q:

Sébastien, how did you feel when you knew that your closest rival for the Championship, Thierry Neuville, had to retire for the day yesterday?

SO:

It changed a little bit at this point. We were aiming for more this weekend but we had a difficult start on Friday. It started with a wrong tyre choice in the afternoon. But when you are in a close fight for the championship like we were with Thierry it is difficult to take these rain tyres that we have never used before and don't have any experience with. It is easier when you are a bit further back in the standings where you can try something, but for us we did not dare to make the choice at this point. In the end it cost us some time. I also struggled a bit with the car. But after that it was an okay weekend. But when Thierry stopped we did not want to take all the risk anymore. Ott did not leave any space for a comeback. He was strong and consistent at the top. We were not so far behind Andreas as well, but he was also fast. But we decided not to take any risks for three more points. At the end it was a good weekend. We are leading the championship again by 17 points. That's the positive of the weekend for us.

Q:

What was your approach for the extra points on the Power Stage? Did you go for them or were you cautious there as well?

SO:

I saw that Thierry would not take so many points there so I did not have to go all crazy but some drivers were pushing hard at the same time. Once again, you have to take a lot of risks to get the max points. But still I wanted to get some points. Our two points are counting at the end of the season and maybe they will be the important ones.

Q:

You said that you wanted to have your future decided before the end of September. We have a little season break now so what will be happening in the next six weeks for you?

SO:

I am sure we will know much more in Spain. It would be great for M-Sport to get the full support again. What the team has achieved so far this year is amazing. It has a good lead in the Manufacturers' Championship as a private team. It would be good to see their efforts rewarded.

Q:

So if the team got the manufacturer funding you would stay?

SO:

Yes, I always mentioned it. It is never easy to switch teams every year. I needed some time this year to get used to the team and the car. This always takes some time. If I could continue and build on what we did this year, I am sure we would be strong. But I also think that we would need a little bit more support to be where I want to be.

Q:

Julien, three rallies to go this season. It is a close fight for the championship but this is also very motivating for everyone, isn't it?

JL:

I hope fans will also follow the rest of the championship as it gets more and more exciting.

Everybody will come back motivated from the six-week break that is upon us. But speaking for us, we are determined to come strong for the final push.

Q:

Malcolm, you are leading in the Drivers' and Manufacturers' Championships, how do you feel about it?

MW:

Very, very happy as you can imagine. We did not think that we would achieve this kind of result prior to the event. But all the guys have done a fantastic job, particularly on Friday under difficult conditions. No real mistakes, stayed out of trouble, I could not ask for more from these guys. It has been a fantastic weekend for us.

Q:

How do you feel about the Manufacturers' Championship in particular, because it was a big gain this weekend?

MW:

Finland turned out better than we expected, so that was a bonus. Getting this result was a real positive. Historically, we have been in this position before and ended up losing it. There are only three events left but we will try to do everything we possibly can to try and secure both championships.

Q:

It is the first victory for M-Sport in Germany, how about this?

MW:

All the boxes are ticked. Now I can retire!

Q:

Success in the WRC, but also success in the WRC 2 with Eric Camilli taking a win as well, so this has been good for the brand?

MW:

Eric had a great rally and he is really showing the promise that we all know he has got. He is really a solid professional driver. This win will further lift his confidence so hopefully Eric can go on to better things as well.

Q:

What will be going on during the upcoming six week break to keep that fantastic line-up of drivers that you have?

MW:

The results tell you that we have a great driver line-up. I would really love to retain all the guys. Whether this is achievable, I genuinely don't know. If it was all in my power, that is what I would definitely like to be doing.

FIA WRC 2 CHAMPIONSHIP (event winner)

Present:

1st - Eric Camilli, M-Sport World Rally Team

1st - Benjamin Veillas, M-Sport World Rally Team

Q:

Eric, it's fantastic to see you on the top step of the podium of the FIA WRC 2 Championship on what has been such a tough weekend in Germany. How are you feeling right now?

EC:

Thank you, I'm feeling good of course. It's an incredible weekend for us. We did what we needed to do. For us, it was very important to win here, especially on tarmac. We've done a good job this weekend, as well as the team. It was not an easy weekend for them and for us.

We started with a problem but the mechanics were very, very efficient and professional. That's why we were able to avoid a penalty because of the clutch, to continue the rally, to come back and to be able to fight. Thanks to all of them.

Q:

As you say, you had a clutch issue on Friday morning and brought the car back to service. Lots of mechanics were working really hard to change the clutch in time.

EC:

We were 100 percent sure that we would receive a penalty. On the last minute, we decided to not change it and try. We lost only 30 seconds. Later, when the car was okay again, we did the maximum to attack on Mittelmosel in the afternoon. After Kopecký had the puncture, it would have been very easy to have a puncture in Panzerplatte. We tried to avoid that and maybe we were just a little bit lucky compared to them.

Q:

Kopecký dropped over a minute behind you. Was it difficult to stay concentrated?

EC:

Yes, of course. With a one minute lead, you can say it's easy to win. But in fact, it's not. When you are in the car you can as well have a puncture. You can make a mistake or something else can happen. You don't know. So, you need to stay focused, concentrated, as we did this morning.

Q:

Were you feeling a little bit nervous with your first win in WRC 2 on the cards here in Germany?

EC:

No pressure, to be honest, I was free. Because since this year in Mexico, okay we finished second after we had a big battle. In Sardinia we won the category, Finland went well, Poland as well. We were free and just wanted to win and finish the race correctly.

Q:

What happens now for the rest of the season? What can you tell us about 2018?

EC:

The next rally we'll do is Spain. We don't score points there but we'll do Rally GB and score points there. We need to prepare for these two events and after that we'll see.

Q:

Benjamin, congratulations to you, too. How was it from the co-driver's seat? Stressful?

BV:

Stressful, maybe, yes – also on Friday morning honestly. I was focusing on my job.

Q:

How tough is a co-driver's job here in Germany? Tougher on the Friday in the vineyard stages or is it generally tough all weekend?

BV:

No, all the weekend.

Q:

I know you had some mechanical issues on Friday. Were there any big moments out there that Eric hasn't told us about?

BV:

Yes, sure. But I'm feeling very happy right now.

FIA WRC 2 CHAMPIONSHIP (Championship winner*)

Present:

1st - Pontus Tidemand, Škoda Motorsport

1st - Jonas Andersson, Škoda Motorsport

Q:

Welcome to the 2017 FIA WRC 2 Champions, Pontus Tidemand and Jonas Andersson. Pontus, this must be such a good feeling for you. You've had a really successful year and you rounded it off early with a championship win already. How does it feel?

PT:

Thank you! For sure it feels good. This is special for us and the team. We have worked very hard and also the team has worked very hard, prepared very well before every rally. They've been putting all efforts there to take this title. That we managed to do it with one rally to go is very good.

Q:

You came into this event trying really hard not to think that you could win the championship title. Has it been quite a pressure-filled event for you?

PT:

Yes, on Friday it was going quite well in the fight for the first position. But early on Saturday we had a puncture and lost almost one minute. We lost contact to the top two. Then we changed strategy and tried to enjoy, drive and not to feel the pressure too much.

Q:

You tried to enjoy – did you manage to enjoy it?

PT:

Yes, for sure. There's some nice stages and a lot of spectators. The car was very well, good and easy to drive. Then we had fun to drive it, yes.

Q:

When you got to the final stage today, knowing that when you reached the end of the Power Stage you would be champion, were there butterflies in your tummy? Were you a little bit nervous?

PT:

Maybe a little bit extra.

JA:

Yes!

PT:

We were listening to every sound in the car. Maybe a little bit, but it was okay.

Q:

So, what happens for the rest of the season? What's next for Pontus Tidemand?

PT:

For sure, Rally GB and also some testing. We don't know yet about Rally Spain.

Q:

Will you remain in WRC 2 and defend your title? Or will you be moving on to other things?

PT:

I live in the moment. No idea.

Q:

What would you like to do, Pontus?

PT:

What do you think?

Q:

A nice World Rally Car would be good, right?

PT:

Yes, that would be good. Soon, it should be time to take this step up. We will see. We'll just keep working hard and need to get the chance.

Q:

Congratulations to you, Jonas, on the WRC 2 co-driver championship title. How do you feel?

JA:

Very, very good. Thank you. It's been a pleasure the whole year. We've done six events so far and got four wins, one second place and now a third place here to secure the title win with one rally to go. It's been an amazing year. I'm very, very happy for the both of us and for the team. The rest of the season: we'll see how many rounds we can do. But then we can go really flat out.

Q:

There are absolutely no worries. You can do what you want in the remaining rounds.

JA:

Yes, that's very nice. We'll see. Like you said, we will do Rally GB. Hopefully, maybe, one event more.

Q:

Any little mistake can be punished quite hard. What about you – where you feeling any pressure at all this weekend?

JA:

Like we said, on Friday none of us really thought much about the championship. We just said before the rally that we wanted to go out and enjoy. We like the rally and just wanted to set some good times. On Saturday, when we had the puncture and dropped down to third place, then you start to think a bit more and start to go a little bit more onto the safe side. Then it all becomes a little bit more difficult because you don't use the car properly and probably don't concentrate 100 percent. Then you feel the pressure. Overall, for the weekend, it's been very good, actually.

FIA JUNIOR WRC / WRC 3 CHAMPIONSHIP (event winner)

Present:

1st - Julius Tannert, ADAC Sachsen E.V.

1st - Jürgen Heigl, ADAC Sachsen E.V.

Q:

Julius, you've won with a 12-minute lead. You must be feeling good right now.

JT:

It's a really good feeling to be here. To win the Junior WRC at your home event here in Germany is really unbelievable for me. We've said it before but it's really hard against these strong competitors. We made less mistakes than the others. We secured the first place and we're really happy about it.

Q:

Against three tarmac specialists it was always going to be very difficult. At the end of the day, did a little home advantage play its part?

JT:

For sure, we knew some stages. But as you just said, they are tarmac specialists who know the stages also from last year. They pushed really hard and it was hard for us to go the same speed. But in the end, we got first place and that's great.

Q:

How did it go for you in terms of moments and mistakes?

JT:

Well, it started on Thursday with this stage in the city. We had a small moment when we touched the wall. Also in the vineyards, we had to reverse two times and the feeling was not so good. We lost a lot of time on Friday. And then on Saturday morning everything changed and went well for us. On the last one and a half days we secured the first position and took no further risks.

Q:

So many drivers say that you can lose focus when you're not in a battle. You didn't?

JT:

It was really hard, especially today. The stages look easy but they aren't. To make no mistake is quite hard. If you're not pushing and fighting for every second it is easy to make a mistake. This would have been a big drama if we had crashed on the last stage. I was a bit nervous at the start but in the end, everything went well.

Q:

Jürgen, were you a little bit nervous going into that final stage today, knowing that you could take the win?

JH:

Absolutely!

Q:

How difficult was it from a co-driver's perspective to get everything on point this weekend?

JH:

It was really difficult because of the conditions, with the rain. But we are here now – we have won. That's good.

Q:

Did you celebrate a little bit in the car when you crossed the finish line?

JH:

Maybe! But tomorrow I have to go to the Barum Rally.

Q:

You're competing at Barum as well?

JH:

Just me.

JT:

I rent out my co-driver to others! I have to save some money for Spain!

FIA WRC 3 CHAMPIONSHIP (Championship winner*)

Present:

1st - Nil Solans

1st - Miguel Ibanez

Q:

Nil, congratulations on the FIA WRC 3 Championship win. We were waiting to see if it would be a Junior WRC Championship as well – but you picked up WRC 3. How are you feeling right now?

NS:

It was difficult. On Friday we went off. It was my fault. In one corner we were too late. Well, we are WRC 3 Champions. But that's not the main championship that we want to win. We wanted to take points for both championships but we still have to concentrate and fight in

Spain. We maybe need to change something on the car to be fast in Spain and win the championship.

Q:

You've had such a dominant season so far but here it was a bit tougher. We saw you make a mistake. Is that because of the pressure?

NS:

This time I was thinking more about to not do mistakes, winning the championship, and didn't go as fast. In the wet stages I didn't feel comfortable. I went too late while trying to play it safe. It's a bit strange but we crashed. Luckily, the team could repair the car and everything was fine for the next day. We are still here, in second place. Everyone makes mistakes. It was a tricky event, really difficult. It's our first time here in wet conditions. I think we learned something for next year.

Q:

When we go to Spain, your home event, you just have to win four stages to win the Junior WRC title. Is that correct?

NS:

Yes, let's see if we can get these few stages. We know that we are fast. But we've seen what happened in the last rallies. It's strange because in the first split times we're always in front and then we start to lose much time. Maybe it's the car, maybe us – we don't know. We have to work.

Q:

Miguel, has this been the toughest weekend for a co-driver?

MI:

This weekend it was very, very difficult. Three different types of stages, very bumpy and wet. One small mistake and then you're out.

Q:

Are looking forward to your home event in Spain?

MI:

Yes, it's our home. I think this year it's possible to win the rally and to win a lot of stages.

* Subject to the official publication of the results by the FIA