



FEDERATION INTERNATIONALE DE L'AUTOMOBILE

**2012 FIA WORLD RALLY CHAMPIONSHIP
ADAC RALLYE DEUTSCHLAND**

Post event FIA Press Conference
Sunday 26 August 2012

Present:

1st - Sébastien Loeb, Citroën Total World Rally Team
1st - Daniel Elena – Citroën Total World Rally Team
2nd - Jari-Matti Latvala, Ford World Rally Team
2nd - Miikka Anttila – Ford World Rally Team
3rd - Mikko Hirvonen, Citroën Total World Rally Team
3rd - Jarmo Lehtinen – Citroën Total World Rally Team
Yves Matton – Team Principal, Citroën Total World Rally Team

Q:

Sébastien, your ninth win at Rallye Deutschland and Citroën's 10th WRC victory at this event! Congratulations, how are you feeling?

SL:

For sure I feel really good. It was nearly a perfect weekend and it was not easy not to make any mistakes. The tyre choice was complicated and some stages were very narrow. On the whole it was not easy but I had a good feeling with the car. I was very constant. The key was maybe not to make any mistakes.

Q:

Did you feel any pressure from the boys behind? Petter came quite close once, before he made that mistake.

SL:

I had the feeling that, whenever I was pushing hard, I could make a difference. But then it's a question of not making any mistakes. For sure I felt that the others were pushing, but then there was this gap and I was a bit more comfortable.

Q:

At what point were you able to ease back in terms of pace?

SL:

On Saturday morning we had a good lead of about 20 seconds and from that point we knew we could relax a bit. When I was able to further extend my lead I could take it easy. On the long stage we just kept going. After the second Baumholder stage we knew we would be okay.

Q:

On Saturday morning after the first stage it started raining, but you were lucky, with less rain than the others.

SL:

Yes, I was definitely lucky, because we had rain on this stage, but we had less than the other drivers. At this point we were able to increase our lead.

Q:

The route has been changed this year with many stages reversed, was it lots of work for you to do ahead of the event?

DE:

There were lots of junctions. On the Panzerplatte stage there were 113 junctions. This means there is a lot of work to do before the rally. During the recce you have to write down each junction. It's easier when the stages are reversed, because then they are new for everyone.

Q:

Is this rally one of your personal favourites?

DE:

Ten years before now we celebrated our first victory, shortly after that my daughter was born. My daughter's birthday will be in a few days. That's a nice anniversary.

Q:

Jari-Matti, this is your best-ever result at a Tarmac event; does that give you confidence now for future events?

J-ML:

The result was really good. The podium was my target. I knew that this is Loeb's favourite rally and he would be difficult to beat. You need to be realistic. The Panzerplatte stage went well, but I wasn't able to win it. Maybe next year. Looking at the distance, you can say that this is a long rally with the current cars.

Q:

You set two fastest stage times. Why did you completely back off at some points?

J-ML:

I had a big accident in the past. This is still on my mind and that's why I backed off a bit too much. If I had kept going the same way, I would have damaged the car and not made it to the finish. I learned a lesson. Next time I don't want to back off that much.

Q:

There are two more Tarmac rallies coming up this year. How confident are you feeling?

J-ML:

Of course we are more confident since we finished on the podium here. There is still work to be done. I was really enjoying myself on the Panzerplatte. Now I am looking forward to Rallye de France and Rallye Catalunya, which are events I really like.

Q:

Jari-Matti, you said at the pre-event press conference that this rally had not been kind to you in the past, now you walk away with second position. Are you changing your mind about that statement?

J-ML:

I think so. At least we have achieved something here.

Q:

How would you analyse the weekend? Were there any big moments out there?

MA:

There was a big moment on Saturday morning. We came off the road in a right hand corner, but we were very lucky to get back on the road, which was a relief.

Q:

What was the biggest challenge this weekend?

MA:

It was the changing weather again. This is generally a difficult rally but with the weather it is even more tricky. So we are pleased to sit here.

Q:

Mikko, did you struggle with the confidence on Friday?

MH:

Maybe not only on Friday. It wasn't so easy yesterday either. I wasn't so happy with the pace sometimes, but in the end I came through without any problems and ended up on the podium. I learned again this weekend.

Q:

Looking back, why weren't you quite so confident?

MH:

In many of the slower corners where we were cutting and there was gravel, I was afraid that the car would start to understeer or that we could hit the concrete or a rock. This is something I need to improve before the Rallye de France. I just need to get more mileage in the car.

Q:

What did you think of going on a hard compound on the wet surface?

MH:

It is slippery like you can imagine. I spun in a hairpin and went off the road, but except for that they were okay. It's very unpredictable here with the weather. This is one aspect that makes the rally so difficult.

Q:

Are you feeling better with your car, going into France and Spain?

MH:

Yes, Spain especially. I am okay, I am just not confident enough. I just need to get more miles in the car.

Q:

How has the weekend been from your perspective?

JL:

It was a bit frustrating sometimes. It was a funny rally. We had some really good split times, but some were bad. It was sometimes stressful in the car, when it was difficult to read the pace notes. There were ups and downs all the time. Yesterday it got better. The Panzerplatte in the afternoon was nice for me.

Q:

What was the plan for today? Was the plan to push at all?

JL:

The plan was to push a little bit on the first bit of the first stage and then we stalled on the start line and that was it. It is a really pleasing result - especially compared to our performance. We scored some good points on the Power Stage as well.

Q:

Yves, this is the team's 10th WRC win at Rallye Deutschland, that is a very impressive run. You seem to be incredibly successful at this event...

YM:

Philippe Bugalski was very important for the team. He won here eleven years ago, and since then Citroën was successful again and again.

Q:

What was your impression of your drivers' performance this weekend?

YM:

Seb was working like always. I cannot say much about that. This was Mikko's first proper Tarmac rally in this car. It was not easy, with some very narrow roads and the changing weather conditions.

Q:

What did you think of Thierry Neuville's performance?

YM:

We asked him to finish on the podium, which was a high expectation. But sometimes you need to push the drivers in order to get good results. The pace notes weren't fully reliable. We are sure that he will be able to finish on the podium in the future.

2012 FIA PRODUCTION CAR WORLD RALLY CHAMPIONSHIP

Present:

1st - Michal Kosciuszko – Lotos Dynamic Rally Team

1st - Maciej Szczepaniak – Lotos Dynamic Rally Team

Q:

Congratulations Michal, how are you feeling?

MK:

That was very important for us to win this event. We are back in the game. Now we are chasing the leader. The team made a fantastic job. The car was prepared really well and we did not have any problems. We could concentrate on clean driving. My co-driver also did a great job. We had very good pace notes.

Q:

One of the problems was heavy braking out there. How did you manage that situation?

MK:

Yes, it was difficult, especially on the first day. I didn't expect to have such big problems with the brakes. I analysed all the data with the engineer and then I changed my braking style overnight. Then the braking problems disappeared. On every rally I can get some new knowledge.

Q:

How tough was the weekend, with the changing weather conditions and changing surfaces?

MK:

Very tough, of course. We sometimes made a bad tyre choice and drove on the hard compound slicks on wet surfaces. It was really scary sometimes with this heavy car. It was not so much the braking points that represented a problem but rather a question of

how to keep the car on the road. When we switched to soft compound tyres the handling was better. We have one of the fastest cars at the moment.

Q:

Maciej, how difficult was it? They reversed the stages. Was it a busy weekend for co-drivers?

MS:

It was a challenging job, especially in the vineyards, but we did quite a lot of testing. Our pace note system was quite well prepared. But of course we cannot make use of the gravel cars, so we need to make all the notes on the first round of the stages to be ready for the second loop, which makes the job even more difficult.

Q:

How much dirtier were the stages during the second running?

MS:

You need to use the grip of the tyres to get the best result. But if you don't know where the big guys moved the mud onto the road, you are in danger sometimes.

Q:

How did you manage to keep Michal cool when you were having those brake problems on the opening day?

MS:

He is very professional. Braking was not an issue on the second day any more.

Q:

How confident are you feeling in terms of the Championship? Your team-mate Benito Guerra is still in front...

MK:

We are back in the game. Now we need to score some more points in Sardinia and Catalunya. We are pretty sure we can win the Championship. It will be a fight with Benito, that's for sure. We have a rally in Poland ahead of us, which will be a good practice for Sardinia. We know Sardinia very well, as we won the Junior Championship there. I think we can win the PWRC.