

18 August 2018 – No. 22 – 2018 ADAC Rallye Deutschland

## Ott Tänak on course for victory at the ADAC Rallye Deutschland

- **Toyota Gazoo Racing WRT within touching distance of first victory at the German rally**
- **Sébastien Ogier loses ground to championship leader Thierry Neuville**
- **Iconic Panzerplatte the backdrop to spectacular WRC battles**

Munich/St. Wendel. Ott Tänak's (EST) lead remains intact after day three of the ADAC Rallye Deutschland. Currently third in the World Championship, the Estonian now leads Dani Sordo (ESP) by 43.7 seconds and Jari-Matti Latvala (FIN) by 44.5 seconds after 15 of 18 special stages. The 30-year-old Estonian is well placed to repeat last year's victory in Germany. With Tänak having switched from a Ford Fiesta WRC to a Toyota Yaris WRC at the end of last season, this would be the first victory in Germany for the Toyota Gazoo Racing WRT team. Reigning world champion Sébastien Ogier (FRA) suffered a major set-back in his bid to reel in championship leader Thierry Neuville (BEL) and claim his sixth world title when a puncture on the second long Panzerplatte stage cost the Frenchman over a minute and a half.

Big crowds lined the route in the Saarland region, and they were treated to a feast of thrilling motorsport from the word go, on a day that featured eight special stages (SS). Unlike on Friday, when the seemingly unstoppable Tänak set fastest time after fastest time, today's eight stage wins were spread across six drivers. Tänak's team-mate Latvala got off to the best start, winning the opening sprint stage on the Panzerplatte. Hyundai driver Sordo emerged triumphant on the subsequent marquee stage, which saw the world's top rally drivers tackle a further 40 km on the Baumholder military training ground. Away from the Panzerplatte, Toyota driver Esapekka Lappi (FIN) won the Freisen special stage, while Craig Breen (IRL) took victory on Römerstraße in his Citroën C3 WRC. WRC driver Elfyn Evans (GBR) came off the road in his Ford Fiesta WRC on the final stage of the morning and was unable to continue.

After the midday service, Sordo once again showed his class on the military training ground: the 2013 winner was fastest on both stages on this challenging terrain. In contrast, it was to prove a frustrating afternoon for Ogier: the world champion's Ford Fiesta suffered a puncture on the Panzerplatte 2 stage. The ensuing tyre change cost the Frenchman 1:43 minutes and saw him drop back into ninth place. Ogier bounced back with the fastest time on the Freisen 2 stage. Latvala took the stage win on the closing Römerstraße 2 stage, while Ogier was able to fight his way back into seventh place overall.

Behind the various stage winners, Tänak was consistently putting in fast times and was able to pull further clear of the chasing pack. Meanwhile, Neuville was grappling with the set-up of his Hyundai i20 Coupe WRC and, at one point, dropped back from third place to fifth. However, Ogier's misfortune took some of the pressure off the championship-leading Belgian, who ended the day in fourth place.

Local favourite Marijan Griebel is currently the best-placed German at the ADAC Rallye Deutschland in eleventh place. The 29-year-old, making his first appearance in a Citroën DS3 WRC, remains within touching distance of his goal – the top ten. Škoda driver Fabian Kreim climbed to 16th place overall and fifth in the WRC 2 class. Roman Schwedt is also having a good rally in his Peugeot 208 R5: the youngest homegrown driver in the field, at just 19 years of age, he is currently the third-best German in 25th place.

## Media information

**Standings after 15 of 18 special stages:**

1.	Tänak/Järveoja (EST/EST)	Toyota Yaris WRC	2h 23m 27.1s
2.	Sordo/Del Barrio (ESP/ESP)	Hyundai i20 Coupe WRC	+ 43.7s
3.	Latvala/Anttila (FIN/FIN)	Toyota Yaris WRC	+ 44.5s
4.	Neuville/Gilsoul (BEL/BEL)	Hyundai i20 Coupe WRC	+ 52.5s
5.	Lappi/Ferm (FIN/FIN)	Toyota Yaris WRC	+ 58.8s
6.	Mikkelsen/Jæger (NOR/NOR)	Hyundai i20 Coupe WRC	+ 1m 50.7s
7.	Ogier/Ingrassia (FRA/FRA)	Ford Fiesta WRC	+ 1m 51.2s

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