

## Media information



18 August 2018 – 2018 ADAC Rallye Deutschland

**MEET THE CREWS SESSION LEG 3 – 18 August, 2018****Present:**

Tommi Mäkinen, Toyota Gazoo Racing WRT  
 Michel Nandan, Hyundai Shell Mobis World Rally Team  
 Malcolm Wilson, M-Sport Ford World Rally Team  
 Pierre Budar, Citroën Total Abu Dhabi WRT

**Q:**

Tommi, what another great day it has been for Ott Tänak and it's not just one Toyota we see on the podium now: it's two, because Latvala is there as well. Talk to me first about Mr. Tänak.

**TM:**

Yeah, well, I think Ott has controlled the day very well and driven very well. Not absolutely pushing flat out, because he had a good lead in the morning and I think he could control it today. Not necessarily setting the fastest-paced times. No dramas whatsoever. I would say, in the morning he was not absolutely happy with the car set-up and then they changed something and in the afternoon it was better.

**Q:**

Now Tänak has a good lead of over 40 seconds in hand going into tomorrow. Jari-Matti Latvala, though, there's a great battle going on for podium positions and he's just eight tenths of a second behind Dani Sordo. You'd love to see a Toyota one-two here, Tommi. What's the instruction to Jari-Matti tomorrow?

**TM:**

I feel very confident because I can see a smiley Jari-Matti. He was so confident and happy when he arrived at the service and I'm sure he will do his best tomorrow.

**Q:**

We chatted yesterday about the rally and I did say I would ask all the team managers tonight about 2019 and possible driver line-ups. Tommi, this is the year where we see nearly all the drivers out of contract, except Ott Tänak and Andreas Mikkelsen. Who's going to be part of Toyota next year? Tell us!

**TM:**

The way it's looking at the moment, obviously I don't have any reason to do anything.

**Q:**

So, you're going to keep all your drivers, right? You're not shopping for anybody else?

**TM:**

Ah, well, maybe you want to ask somebody else?

**Q:**

Michel, that question is coming, but let's talk to you about your day out there. Dani Sordo: yesterday, we didn't see much pace from him. Today, he's king of Panzerplatte and he's in second position. What a change-around!

**MN:**

Yeah, well, it's true, Dani's always good on this stage. Last year, also he did the best time. It's probably his way of driving on this stage, but he likes this stage. The car fits quite well there. Two best times and he's up into second. We think tomorrow there will be a close battle for second position, because I think we have four drivers within fifteen seconds.

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**Q:**

We've seen Thierry Neuville really struggle out there today and Latvala has had advantage over him. For the drivers' title, for the manufacturers title, you want him to get ahead if possible. What can be done tomorrow? It's a big day, Sunday, it's about 75 kilometres. Can he try and catch the boys in front?

**MN:**

Tomorrow is a very, very difficult day and one stage which is run two times, which is difficult. So, it's not easy. I think the mechanics and engineers will have a look at his car this evening and try to improve it a bit, but let's see.

**Q:**

Now, Michel, you just have Andreas Mikkelsen in contract next year. Thierry, Dani, Hayden, all out of contract next year! How close are you to keeping Mr. Neuville, the man who could be world champion this year, and are you looking at other drivers?

**MN:**

We are quite happy with what we have. Probably, it will be quite good to keep that. Of course, we are looking, but at the moment it is most important to focus on the World Rally Championship and the two titles. I will answer later. Maybe later in the year.

**Q:**

What if Tommi Mäkinen is flexing his credit card, or Pierre Budar, who is looking for a rally winner? They're chasing your drivers, maybe. You've got to protect them.

**MN:**

Maybe.

**Q:**

Malcolm, there have been better days for you in the World Championship. It has been a tough day for M-Sport: Elfyn Evans off earlier, issues for Sébastien Ogier this afternoon, dropping 1:40 minutes out there. He is still there though, which is the key thing – making his way back up the leaderboard. It was a tough afternoon though...

**MW:**

Yes, it was a tough afternoon, no question. Elfyn went off and then, of course, Craig [Breen] went off at the same place. Normally there would not have been a lot of damage, but in the undergrowth there was a big lump of concrete, which basically broke all the suspension and damaged the chassis. Then of course Sébastien just clipped a Hinkelstein and had a front-left puncture. He did a fantastic job – 1:38 minutes I think – to change it, and then his speed through the stage after that was as quick as Dani. There are still good points to play for. I think he can hopefully get into sixth place and then see what might happen on the Power Stage. Not the day that we wanted, and we've lost Eric Camilli who was leading WRC 2 as well, so it hasn't been a good day in the office.

**Q:**

Regarding Ogier: when we first saw that he was running into difficulties, everyone immediately thinks of the championship because it is so close now – and also the Manufacturers' Championship as well. With Ogier still here and pushing for Power Stage points tomorrow, what is the most he can hope to achieve in terms of the leaderboard?

**MW:**

If nothing happens to the guys in front, then the best we can hope for is sixth.

**Q:**

Malcolm, you've had Sébastien Ogier for the past two years now, Seb says that he wants a decision made on his future in September this year. How close are you to keeping your world

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champion? We know that a lot of people are chasing him at the moment. I hear that all three of the other team principals are chasing Seb.

**MW:**

Well, I've got enough time left now to go and see my bank manager and I'm going to be greedy: I'm going to sign Thierry, I'm going to sign Sébastien, and I haven't decided on my third driver yet.

**Q:**

In the Finnish press this week we heard from manager Timo Jouhki, who said that Jari-Matti Latvala has a full drive next year, and also Teemu Suninen. But they don't know which teams they have a full drive with. You've got Teemu right now. Are you keeping him?

**MW:**

That is exactly what Timo told me as well: he's got a drive for Jari and a drive for Teemu. Tommi and I don't know who they have the drives with.

**Q:**

Let's turn to Citroën now and Pierre Budar. We saw Craig Breen on pace today – yesterday he struggled, but there were some better times and a fastest time from him today. Unfortunately, he went off this afternoon. He made it through the stage, but it was a really difficult afternoon for him and the team.

**PB:**

Yes, he had quite a nice morning with one stage win, but the afternoon was quite horrible for us. It was in the same corner as Elfyn Evans. It is very, very bad tonight, because we didn't expect to end the day like this.

**Q:**

It's such a shame, because we had seen the pace from him today, he was more confident today.

**PB:**

He was very comfortable in the car. He was setting a good pace without taking any risks – according to him. The final stage was his best stage in the morning and maybe he wanted to do a bit too much to end the day in the same way.

**Q:**

So, 2019. You've already said that you want a man who can go out there and win rallies for you. We've seen Mads Østberg in the team, Craig Breen, Sébastien Loeb still to come in Spain. Who else are you talking to around the service park?

**PB:**

I just had an idea: maybe Mäkinen is available.

**Q:**

Would you sign him Pierre, do you think he has still got it?

**PB:**

I am looking for a world champion.

**Q:**

Well, there you go. This could work out very well for you tonight Tommi. When do you hope to get some decisions made Pierre? Once one driver gets a decision, it should all fall into place, shouldn't it?

**PB:**

One thing is certain: I need to know before I submit the entry list for Monte Carlo.

**MW:**

I've just decided who my third driver will be. Sébastien Loeb.

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**Present:**

Ott Tänak, Toyota Gazoo Racing WRT  
 Dani Sordo, Hyundai Shell Mobis World Rally Team  
 Jari-Matti Latvala, Toyota Gazoo Racing WRT

**Q:**

Ott, another great day on the German stages and a good advantage with the lead over Dani. Are you feeling happy and confident that the win can be yours tomorrow?

**OT:**

Yes, for sure. I'm happy with the outcome of the day. I must say, I had quite a lot of pressure all morning. Seb was pushing really hard and I didn't feel too comfortable in the car. The rhythm was not easy, but I was working really hard to make a good pace to set some good times. But sometimes it's kind of a tough job, especially when Seb is behind you. It was not easy, but in the afternoon we managed to improve the feeling quite a lot. The balance was much better and I started to enjoy it. Unfortunately, Seb had the puncture and lost a lot of time. So, we have a big gap.

**Q:**

In terms of competition, it's always great to be in a bit of a battle. Now the pressure is off, but we still have three tough stages tomorrow. It's not over yet. 75 competitive kilometres to go here, Ott?

**OT:**

Yes, it's a very long day tomorrow. We have some really demanding stages. We really need to be focussed in the morning. Anything can happen in the vineyards and the forest. So, we really need to keep focussed. After Seb lost a lot of time, I still get my speed. Just in dirty places I was careful, but when I had clean tarmac I was enjoying the stages. And the car was working nice. It's still enjoyable. I hope I will also enjoy tomorrow, that's the easiest way to finish the rally.

**Q:**

You've got a host of fans in Estonia, who travel to follow you everywhere. But you are picking up fans everywhere who like your driving style. Is it a confidence boost to see so many people supporting you?

**OT:**

Yes, for sure. We can see that the sport is on a high at the moment. We have so many people following. All this WRC is thanks to all the fans, you know, so a big thanks to you... (Applause)

**Q:**

Dani Sordo, yesterday frustration, not a lot of pace out there. Today you're the king of Panzerplatte and it's gone the brilliantly for you. Really strong performance, Dani, what do you put it down to. What's the change?

**DS:**

Today Panzerplatte were completely different stages, different to the others. We did well. We were happy with the car. It's not only performance there so we just drive. On the stages after I struggled a little bit like yesterday. But we still fight. Was nice.

**Q:**

You were a little bit worried about losing time on the final two stages, because you lost time on the runs in the morning. But you were really strong and on pace with the Toyotas. Did you give some extra?

**DS:**

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I do my best all the time. Okay, last stage I lost a bit in some of the corners. I was really, really fast. I had a lot of confidence. At this speed when you lift a little bit you lose a lot of time. We lost a little bit to Jari-Matti and Lappi. Tomorrow is a long day. There are two difficult stages. The long one we do two times. It will be an incredible day.

**Q:**

We have seen so many final-day battles here in Germany involving you. You know how it is to go out there and turn it on tomorrow. But Jari-Matti is eight tenths of a second behind you. He's really going to be chasing you tomorrow.

**DS:**

Tomorrow anything can happen. Thierry, Jari, Lappi and I are really, really close. We will have a nice fight and enjoy of the day.

**Q:**

Jari-Matti, a bit similar to Dani yesterday. In the morning you were not happy. You came to the stage ends and said: "It's not good enough, I am not happy." Then today you turned on the pace and seemed to be more confident with your drive and it's a big battle for second now.

**J-ML:**

I started to find the confidence for the car and the driving. But I was actually driving the wrong way. I realised it. It's been too long for me since I was on tarmac, because I retired in Corsica with the accident halfway through the rally. I feel I've been missing some tarmac driving. So, it took a bit of time. Today the feeling has been good. It's been an amazing fight with Dani. I couldn't match his pace in Baumholder. He was really, really good. I tried to attack on this Freisen and Römerstraße on the countryside roads which suited me much better.

**Q:**

Tomorrow, vineyard stages... we've seen success for you in the past and we've seen drama in these stages for you in the past as well. Hopefully tomorrow it's going to be smooth. Can you catch him?

**J-ML:**

For sure it's going to be a hard fight. I will do everything that I can. Also, I think Dani will push to the maximum. Graftschaft, the long one, is going to be difficult, because the first eight kilometres are completely new. There will be some slippery places. But we keep will keep a cool head and see what happens. The fight is on.