



MEET THE CREWS SESSION LEG 1 – 22 August, 2019

Present:

Sébastien Ogier, Citroën Total World Rally Team
Ott Tänak, Toyota Gazoo Racing World Rally Team
Esapekka Lappi, Citroën Total World Rally Team

Q:

Seb, it's going to be a full-on fight, there's only 22 points between you and Ott Tänak. It's coming to the end of the season now. Crucial to get as many points on the board as possible. This is a rally where you've done that before. How confident are you feeling?

SO:

There's five events to go, so for sure you're getting closer and closer to the end, but still many points to catch. Obviously we want to change the trend and change the way it was going in the last rallies. Finland was not really nice for us, we lost some ground and obviously I don't like these kind of weekends. For sure, coming back on tarmac the aim is much higher and we want to fight for the win this weekend, but we know that we are not alone. It was very, very close already in the shakedown this morning, not only with Ott, but obviously Ott is the one we want to beat because that's the main rival for the championship. Not forgetting Thierry of course, who is also only three points behind me. I think we will have nice weather and the conditions will be enjoyable for a good fight for the weekend.

Q:

Yeah, it looks as if it's going to be dry the whole weekend, which hopefully for you guys will make tyre choice quite an easy one. We like to see a bit of rain, it makes it exciting for us to watch it, but for you not so much. You've had an engine upgrade since we saw the car in Finland, how much of a difference is that making? Are you seeing the benefit?

SO:

A huge difference. They have no chance at all this weekend. (Laughter) We will be driving only in road mode this weekend and it was enough this morning. No, I mean, of course, every small update is always nice to take, so yes it was a small core update, so we're always happy to have it. I've been asked that many times already this weekend, and it's not something you can really sense in the car, but if they are there then they must help to set better times. That's what we need at the end of the day. Other than that, I think we've been working quite hard also on the set-up, because obviously the last tarmac race was bad for us, we were not competitive in Corsica. At least this morning it looks ok, nothing crazy, but we are in the mix, so let's see what we can do.

Q:

He is the man to beat right now, Ott Tänak. What is it going to take to beat him?

SO:

I don't know, but it's definitely possible. (Laughter) He's looking away already, starting to be scared, so... No, I mean, yeah like I say, it will be an intense fight. Ott has won the last two editions here and I have to change that you know, I don't want to let him win one more time and I'm up for the fight.

Q:



OK, thank you very much Seb. Let's turn to Ott Tänak now. See if he is feeling scared. We can't see your eyes behind those glasses, so we're not sure. But how are you feeling - ahh, there we go!

OT:

There's nothing scary.

Q:

That's what we like to hear. Now, you've had a great run of success and, as Seb said, you could be on for another win here, which would make it a hat-trick of wins in Germany. Different conditions again this year, it's going to be dry for the whole weekend. Confidence high?

OT:

The weekend is looking nice, Germany is always one of the most tricky with the weather and if it's consistent then, of course, it makes life a lot easier. But still we've seen in the past that fights here are always very, very tight, as we had last year with Seb. Every stage we were most of the time in the same second, so if you want to make some difference here, you need to have a very good package. Hopefully our package this weekend is as good as it was last year.

Q:

You say hopefully. Are you not that absolutely confident that it is then? You should be by now?

OT:

I'm confident with my package, but I have no idea what kind of package the others have, so we have to see that tomorrow. But so far, my feeling is good.

Q:

A little bit away from the rally now then Mr Tänak, because we're waiting to find out what you'll do next year, when you sign on the dotted line. Lots of media reporting that you'll stay with Toyota, some saying that you will move to M-Sport, maybe. What's the latest update for us?

OT:

Latest update is that I'm still here, I'm still driving Toyota and there's still a title to get. So, it's as easy as that. To be honest, you know, on paper things are always a bit more complicated than you expect them to be, so it's not so straightforward. Let's say in the background people are working on it, but it will still take some time.

Q:

What's making it complicated?

OT:

Rallying I believe. (Laughter)

Q:

When are you going to make this decision, have you got a deadline for yourself?

OT:

I do the decision when everything is ready, so it's as easy as that.

Q:

OK, Ott Tänak, thank you very much

SO:

When there is enough zeroes on the contract, then he is signing. (Laughter)

Q:

I think you might be right there Seb, I think you might be right.

Q:

Esapekka, let's talk to you now then. How are you feeling about this weekend? Because we saw you on the podium in Finland. Brilliant performance there. We were hoping it wasn't going to be a one-off performance. Good run at shakedown this morning, you feeling good?

EL:

Yeah, I was surprised about the time to be honest. Yeah, to be honest I look forward more about the gravel now as I know the car is really much better and fit for me. But this is tarmac, I've never really enjoyed this rally too much because it's so tricky, and I like clean tarmac and not dirty one, and this is all the time dirty. But yeah, the speed was good, but I was quite on the limit on the shakedown. I realised that and I understand that if I continue at this speed, I cannot see so many stages tomorrow.

Q:

We want to see you do as many stages as possible here, obviously. I asked Seb the question about the engine. Surely you've had the question thrown at you many times. Are you feeling the difference? Is it a noticeable difference or not?

EL:

No, no, I can't really, it's still fine. I mean the engine is good, but I cannot really say what's the difference.

Q:

Well, that's fair enough. Talk to me about Panzerplatte, because we're seeing it in reverse. Well, we have seen it that way before, but I hear from a lot of the drivers that it was really quite dirty when you went through there. There was a lot of punctures on the recce.

EL:

Yeah, it's correct, it's a long stage. Some sections are really broken from the concrete parts and I guess that's causing the punctures on the recce for many drivers. I had one, I think the next guy had more than one, I think three. Toyota boys had punctures and there were cars stopped here and there. Ok, rally tyres are stronger, but still I believe it's a bit of a lottery who will survive without a puncture. If you can do that, you should be quite satisfied.

Q:

Final question, probably a bit of an unfair one. Where do you think Ott is going next year?

EL:

We haven't really discussed it, you know.

Q:

What's your opinion EP? What do you think? If you were Ott Tänak, what would you do?

EL:

I believe he will stay.

Q:

Yeah?

EL:

Yeah.

SO: You think it's enough zeroes?



Q:

OK guys, I'll let you go now then. Thank you very much Sebastien Ogier, Ott Tänak and Esapekka Lappi.