



END OF DAY “MEET THE CREWS” SESSION DAY 3 – 24-8-2013

Present:

Yves Matton, Citroën Total Abu Dhabi World Rally Team
Malcolm Wilson, Qatar M-Sport World Rally Team
Jost Capito, Volkswagen Motorsport
Dani Sordo, Citroën Total Abu Dhabi World Rally Team
Thierry Neuville, Qatar World Rally Team
Mikko Hirvonen, Citroën Total Abu Dhabi World Rally Team

Q:

Yves, it has been a dramatic day here in Germany, it is Dani Sordo now who holds the lead at the end of it, but is a very, very slim lead, 0.8 seconds. How do you rate his performance today and can he hold the lead for tomorrow?

YM:

He was doing some very good times and he was coming back to Thierry. Then, in the afternoon, we had some rain, which scared us a little bit as Thierry is coming from a country with a lot of rain. At the moment, he is in the lead. He did a really great job this afternoon.

Q:

We only have two stages tomorrow, it is the same stage run twice. How is Dani's confidence, and are you confident that he can go out there and keep the challenge alive?

YM:

Yes, he is getting better and better since the beginning of the rally. Today, it was important for him to take the lead and start in first place tomorrow.

Q:

Citroën has dominated in Germany over the years. If Dani can keep that claim alive tomorrow, how important would that be for the team?

YM:

Very important. It has been a long time this year that we haven't had a win and to win Germany for us would be great.

Q:

Malcolm, Thierry Neuville in second position overall, as I said only 0.8 second off the lead. He has had a bit of a dramatic afternoon, though, he was very lucky by the sounds of things on that opening stage. Malcolm, tell us what happened today.

MW:

I have to say very lucky. I am actually relieved to have the car here with losing only so little time. He went through a fast section, went wide, went into some logs and he could see where Jari-Matti had also gone off, but he went a little bit further. In one sense, the logs did damage, but the logs also stopped him from going much further off the road. Everybody has probably seen that he drove the last ten kilometres with a tree trunk hanging out of the side of the back of the car. He has managed to extract it himself at the end, but it had done some damage, which caused some problems on the next stage, but we are really relieved to be here, so close to Dani Sordo.



Q:

It is a really tight battle going into tomorrow's stages. Do you think Thierry can handle the pressure that is on his shoulders from what you have seen already from him this weekend?

MW:

The most important thing is that Yves should be thinking about his manufacturers' points and not really bothering about Dani to give Thierry a little chance. But no, we are going to push and try to go for the victory.

Q:

Jost, it was going so well. Jari-Matti was building up his lead, but then in the afternoon, the rain came and a different complexion fell across the rally and he ran into trouble. What happened with Jari-Matti today?

JC:

He went wide at one corner and hit one of these 'Hinkelsteine' and he was lucky that he hit it just with a wing. He could continue and we repaired it here at the service and the door didn't open, but the door has to be closed before he is allowed to leave the service. We could fix that, but in the stage, the door opened and the co-driver had to close the door with his hand and in doing that, he did one announcement of a corner too late and Jari-Matti braked too late and he went off again and that was the end of it. So I feel very sorry for him and he is very sad tonight, but that is the sport and I think now we have two guys in the lead who have never won a WRC event and it is good to have a new winner in the rally as well. If you look at the whole championship, I think it is quite nice, even if we are quite sad that we didn't deliver the result or a win at the home rally, but there is another year next year.

Q:

Will we see Jari-Matti back tomorrow?

JC:

Yes, Jari-Matti will be back tomorrow. He is fifth in the manufacturers' championship and it is quite important for him to keep that position and get the manufacturers' points, and the same for Sébastien Ogier. He is in the manufacturers' points as well and we need these points as the battle between us and Citroën is very tight and we want to be in a position to fight for the championship.

Q:

Senor Sordo, let's start with you. We have really seen your confidence grow this weekend and the speed today has been fantastic. How are you feeling?

DS:

It was really nice today. Really difficult conditions in the second lap of the stages. The gap with Neuville is really, really close and tomorrow will be fun.

Q:

Just 0.8 second is incredibly close. Are you ready, Dani, to take the battle to Thierry tomorrow?

DS:

Yes, of course, I am ready. I think tomorrow will be a nice day. Only one stage two times, so we will try to our best and do a nice job.

Q:

How much are you going to risk, because this is your possibility of your first WRC win, but Citroën want their manufacturers' points as well, so how much are you going to risk to get the win?



DS:

I don't know, I didn't speak about the manufacturers' points at the moment, so there is a good chance to fight for victory in the rally and I need to try to take.

Q:

Thierry, let's turn to you now. It's seems like you were very lucky on the stages this afternoon. A little bit of an incident, the same as Jari-Matti, but you got away with it. Talk to me about it.

TN:

A small incident in the first stage after the service. A very slippery corner and I couldn't avoid the mistake. I was a little bit too fast and it was very slippery, so we hit a few logs, but no major damage on the car, just the exhaust, so I had a little less power for the next stages. Luckily, it went okay and we could come back to the service.

Q:

It such a small gap in time between the two of you, though. Are you feeling a bit nervous for tomorrow or just excited?

TN:

Oh, not at all, really excited. I want to push tomorrow, as Jari-Matti is out of the race and he is not getting points, I just can stay second in the championship and I am definitely going to fight with Dani tomorrow. It will be very interesting.

Q:

What would it mean to you if you could pick up that first WRC win?

TN:

We improved a lot this year and we have already shown a lot of good things. We are waiting for the first victory and we are very, very close now. We were never so close before so that's the chance and we will definitely try to use it.

Q:

Let's turn to Mikko Hirvonen now in third position. A good position to be in, hopefully, there will be good points for you tomorrow. How are you feeling about your performance today?

MH:

It's been okay. Actually, it should be like this (moves further to the side, away from Sordo and Neuville). I can just sit back and enjoy the fight and I am going to take it steady and drive home.

Q:

You never know, with them fighting against each other, you could win the rally still.

MH:

You know, I don't want to think about that. It will be an incredible fight and we are all going to enjoy it. I wish best of luck for both of them and, of course, I hope that Dani is going to take the victory back home, but it is going to be really exciting. We will all love and enjoy it.

Q:

What is your strategy for tomorrow?

MH:

What can I do? I just finish the rally and that's it really.