



FEDERATION INTERNATIONALE DE L'AUTOMOBILE

2014 FIA WORLD RALLY CHAMPIONSHIP

ADAC RALLYE DEUTSCHLAND

Pre-event Press Conference  
Thursday 21 August

**Present:**

Dani Sordo, Hyundai Motorsport  
Jari-Matti Latvala, Volkswagen Motorsport  
Kris Meeke, Citroën Total Abu Dhabi World Rally Team  
Elfyn Evans, M-Sport World Rally Team

**Q:**

Dani, last year you sealed your first WRC win here in Germany after an incredible battle with Thierry Neuville. Good memories coming back here?

**DS:**

Yes, of course, I have good memories, also of this area (the press conference room). But that is one year ago, it is now just a memory. This year, it is completely new for me with another car. I am really pleased to be in the championship, but also to be back here again. I really like it.

**Q:**

We saw how much you liked it last year, but as you said, it is a different experience this year as you are in a different car that is still being very much developed. What is the Hyundai like on Tarmac?

**DS:**

The car is not so bad. It is still quite new. It is a little bit better than Monte Carlo, but it is more a matter of small things than any big steps. We need to be a little bit better in terms of engine and suspension, but the basis is good and we are getting there.

**Q:**

So what are you hoping for this weekend? Do you think you are able to fight right at the front?

**DS:**

I really want to try to be in front, but Volkswagen and Citroën are very strong, and so is Ford. A podium finish would be a good result, but we always want more.

**Q:**

We don't see you at every round, the second seat at Hyundai is always changing. With the possibility of a full-time drive next year with Hyundai, do you feel pressure to perform to your best on each event you attend?

**DS:**

I don't know about next year. I try to do my best on every rally, also here and in the next two rallies, and then we will see what happens next year. If I can drive, it will be nice.

**Q:**

Jari-Matti, just two weeks ago you sealed a great win at home in Finland. You were not only competitively strong but mentally strong also - Jost Capito said it was your best-ever performance, do you feel that way?

**J-ML:**

I agree with him. It was the best drive of my career and to have similar drives in the future would be really good. The mental side, especially when I had a problem and I managed to hold the lead, even with Ogier 3.5 seconds behind, was special. When you can drive events like this, it would be good when you are in the fight for the championship. You can't expect to have this result in every event. If you are good, it can be great.

**Q:**

Can the momentum of success be carried forward here? Can you fight at the front on Tarmac?

**J-ML:**

I was leading last year, but then obviously Dani was coming back very fast. I was under pressure and did a little mistake, which put an end to the fight and it was a great victory for Dani last year. This year, I hope for a clean run and hope to finish on the podium. That would be very good. If we can fight for the victory, it would be fantastic, but for the Drivers' Championship, all the points are very important. Let's get a good feeling in the first stage and then see how it goes.

**Q:**

You said in Finland that you felt there was still a chance of the Championship title, do you feel you need to win here to keep that chance alive?

**J-ML:**

Of course, victory would get me closer, there is no doubt about that, but there are still four events to go after Germany. In Finland, I really needed that victory, but here, we would still be there if we score a few points less than Ogier, but, of course, a victory would help a lot. I try to keep the fight going on for as long as I can.

**Q:**

You have quoted quite a few times Christoph Treier from the team for his support. How much help has he been in preparation ahead of this rally?

**J-ML:**

We have made good progress. Coming from Finland, you can change your mind for the Tarmac, which is very important. Here, the grip level is changing a lot with the cuts and different kind of surfaces. This is what we are working on. Hopefully, I will be prepared for the changing conditions. Normally, if you get a clean run here, you can be quite high up in the standings.

**Q:**

Kris, a strong performance in Finland from you also. We have seen in the past some great performances on this event in the Junior Championship, and in 2008 and in a Clio. It's been three years since you competed on an all-Tarmac event, how are you feeling ahead of this one?

**KM:**

Finland was good, also for my confidence to return to a rally I did before and to be consistent was really good for me. Coming here, it is my first proper tarmac rally in three years. I enjoy this rally. The car speaks for itself, Citroën has won the rally for 11 years. However, cars don't drive themselves. I'll be the limiting factor this weekend. We'll see. I felt comfortable in the shakedown, we did a very good test last weekend. I don't have any expectations, I don't set myself any targets, I just enjoy my driving.

**Q:**

So that is the same approach as in Finland? There, you also mentioned the enjoyment factor and the results came.

**KM:**

Yes, that is the game. When you are enjoying it, you don't have to worry about the stop watch. It will take care of itself. The moment you start concentrating on the times and focussing, it can fall apart very easily. I just try to do the best job I can, and then we see where we are.

**Q:**

What defines Germany from the other Tarmac events on the calendar?

**KM:**

It is an event I enjoy from my first experience with the C2 S1600 from the days when me and Dani were still a little bit younger, so I have some very good memories, and I also had a good run in the private Clio in 2008 and the MINI in 2011. I don't have any recent experience, but I feel comfortable in the car. It is so fast here, you have to be so precise and committed. It may take me a little bit of time to find my feet but I'll give everything to do a good job.

**Q:**

The new Michelin full-wet tyre coming in for this weekend is an extra option for the drivers. No-one is ever sure of the forecast, but are you pleased with it?

**KM:**

Yes, maybe not the extreme wet tyre, but it is more Monte Carlo-like type of tyre. It would be good for a normal Tarmac event. Nobody likes to drive when you have a lot of standing water. Aquaplaning is never nice, because suddenly you become a passenger behind the wheel, so at least we have this option in case of extreme conditions.

**Q:**

Are you feeling any pressure to perform to confirm a drive for next year or do you not let those thoughts creep in during events?

**KM:**

I have been in that situation for most of my career. I have retired twice, I came back twice. Every event is always important. I had some one-off events in Finland and Australia last year, there is always pressure at this level. But when you enjoy it, the times and the results come and next year will take care of itself.

**Q:**

Elfyn, there are so many events this year you have never even seen, but the second half of the season is better for you. How are you feeling coming into Rallye Deutschland?

**EE:**

I am really excited to do my first proper Tarmac event at World Championship level. Last year was a learning year for us. The car feels pretty good on Tarmac so far and we are looking forward to getting it going.

**Q:**

During the test, you had a little off into the vineyard. What happened during the test and before the accident were you able to get some good feedback from the car?

**EE:**

Yes, we had a small off quite early, but it only stopped us for half an hour or so. Other than the little off, it was very productive and we had a very good test with predictable conditions.

**Q:**

So you are feeling very confident for this event?

**EE:**

Yes, the car is really good. It will maybe take us half a day to find our feet, but overall the feeling is very good and hopefully if the notes and everything is correct, there is no reason why we can't enjoy ourselves for the rest of the rally.

**Q:**

We have seen you 'learn' many events during your first season in the WRC, what is the plan for the second half of the year? Do you feel you can increase your pace?

**EE:**

So far, our season has been a bit up and down, some good speed at points, certainly some splits, but also the odd mistake. If we can work on being a bit more consistent and mistake-free, the second half of the season could be good. Let's wait and see what we can do.

**Q:**

What are the really challenges at Rallye Deutschland?

**EE:**

The biggest thing will be the weather. If it stays stable, the event can be really enjoyable. I have been here twice and always ended up on the wrong tyres at some point. There is a strong possibility we will end up in the same situation again this year, but we keep going and try to concentrate and get the heat into the tyres.

## **FIA WRC 2 CHAMPIONSHIP**

**Present:**

Martin McCormack

Armin Kremer

**Q:**

Martin this year we see you compete in WRC 2, so far we have seen you on gravel in Portugal and Sardinia but now the Tarmac of Germany beckons - do you feel more at home on this surface than gravel?

**MMC:**

Definitely. I am trying to adapt to gravel, but I had to learn many things, get things together. Shakedown this morning, I feel so much more at home in the car. I know which steps I want to take and in which direction. I made better pace notes, I just feel much more comfortable in the car on Tarmac.

**Q:**

After the recce what are your thoughts on the stages?

**MMC:**

I was quite impressed when I came here. I am happy with the characteristics of the stages. Some of the stages are really hard. It will be a very good rally, especially on Friday as the forecast is dry, but Saturday will be a tough challenge when the forecast is rain.

**Q:**

Do you have any experience with the Hankook tyres in full wet conditions?

**MMC:**

No, not yet, but this morning I was really impressed with the performance in the shakedown. It will be a challenge in the wet, but I am happy with the feedback we are getting from the tyres at the moment.

**Q:**

This is the debut year for you in WRC 2, how many more events will we see you on and what are your thoughts on the future?

**MMC:**

We will definitely do France, question mark over our possibility in GB. Of course, it being our home event, I would love to do GB, but for the moment, we are excited about going to France after this, and then, we will see.

**Q:**

Are there any plans for next year?

**MMC:**

I haven't spoken with my personal sponsor Tigerrisk yet, but they are happy with the way the programme is going and the exposure they are getting from it. And there is also promise that we will be part of the Hankook team next year. We try to make everything better and faster.

**Q:**

Armin, we haven't seen you since Monte Carlo. How much are you looking forward to your home event?

**AK:**

Yes, it has been quite a long time since Rallye Monte Carlo. I am working a lot with Opel Junior Rally Team, so I am not really away from rallying. We have a new situation here. In the Rallye Monte Carlo I drove a Fiesta R5, here a Fabia S2000, a new experience for me on Tarmac roads.

**Q:**

What is the car like to drive?

**AK:**

It is a race car, fantastic! A new experience for me, we can work on it a lot.

**Q:**

You have driven this rally many times. It is a huge challenge. What is the secret to success here?

**AK:**

It is really difficult. The area here is so nice for us; there are nice roads in the vineyards, Panzerplatte. For everybody, it is a new situation.

**Q:**

The weather plays such a big part here as well. How much does rain change the situation, especially a Panzerplatte?

**AK:**

This is not really nice. For the WRC 2 drivers, we have no idea what we can do. We can't cut the tyres, we have no rain tyres, it is really dangerous.

**Q:**

Is this event just a one-off, or will we see you at any more WRC 2 events?

**AK:**

This year, no, but maybe you will see me at another place.

**Q:**

And about next year?

**AK:**

Well, I am mainly involved with the Opel Junior Team. Maybe we find a new guy for the German drivers.

## **FIA JUNIOR WRC CHAMPIONSHIP**

**Present:**

Mohammed Al Mutawaa  
Christian Riedemann

**Q:**

Mohammed, you made your debut last year here in Germany, how much will that experience help you this year? What did you learn last year?

**MAL:**

First of all, I have been given a golden opportunity by Abu Dhabi Racing. They have been helping me a lot. Last year, I picked up a lot of points in what was my first Tarmac rally. This year, I hope to be faster than last year. Now, I feel more comfortable with the car, I have learned more about the pace notes, so everything should be good.

**Q:**

You mentioned that golden opportunity. Is that just for one rally, or will we see you on more Junior WRC events?

**MAL:**

Well, hopefully, if my performance keeps improving and it keeps going as it is, Abu Dhabi Racing will continue to support me and keeps pushing me to improve myself.

**Q:**

We have seen you compete in the Middle Eastern Rally Championship. How comfortable are you on Tarmac?

**MAL:**

To be honest, I feel more comfortable on Tarmac than I am on gravel because I used to race on circuits for four years. Gravel is a difficult surface because it is hard to predict the handling of the car. On Tarmac, I feel really comfortable. I can push as hard as I can and I know where the limits are.

**Q:**

How did shakedown go for you this morning? Are you happy with the car and the set-up?

**MAL:**

Yes, very much. Citroën Racing and PH Sport have done a very good job. We did some testing a week ago. Everything feels good. We are ready for the weekend.

**Q:**

Christian, this is your home event. We didn't see you in Finland a few weeks ago due to an elbow injury. Are you fully recovered and ready to drive?

**CR:**

I am really happy to be back at my home rally. Sometimes I still have some problems with my elbow, but I think I can drive without any problems. It was disappointing not being able to drive in Finland, because I really wanted to drive there, having already been there three times, but that's life. Now, I am happy to be back in the car and looking forward to my home rally.

**Q:**

What do you hope for this weekend? When you look at the Championship, you are fourth overall in the Junior WRC.

**CR:**

We have had only three out of six rallies so far, so it is only half-time in the Championship, I want to score maximum points. I want to finish this rally on the podium in first or second place. Realistically, this year is my last chance in the WRC as I will be 27 next week. The home rally is fantastic for fans and family. I am really looking forward to it.

**Q:**

Have you been happy with your performance so far this year?

**CR:**

Yes, I am really happy. I changed my pace notes for Poland and I was really happy with my speed there. It was the first time I was at the same level as Lefebvre and Fisher whereas in the past, Fisher usually was a little bit faster. I improved a lot on gravel and now we will see what will happen here on Tarmac. Normally I prefer Tarmac as I am from Germany.

**Q:**

How much are you going to risk? Are you going to put everything in to try and win here?

**CR:**

No, not from the beginning. It is always hard when it rains at Panzerplatte on Saturday. This year, the Panzerplatte will be harder than before as we have some new parts and the concrete is very rough, so for the two-wheel drive cars, it is important to save the tyres for the long stage.