



## END OF DAY “MEET THE CREWS” SESSION DAY 2 – 23.08.2014

### **Present:**

Jost Capito, Volkswagen Motorsport  
Yves Matton, Citroën Total Abu Dhabi World Rally Team  
Michel Nandan, Hyundai Shell World Rally Team  
Malcolm Wilson, M-Sport World Rally Team  
Jari-Matti Latvala, Volkswagen Motorsport  
Kris Meeke, Citroën Total Abu Dhabi World Rally Team  
Thierry Neuville, Hyundai Shell World Rally Team

### **Q:**

Jost, we are going to start with you. First of all, tell us about Sébastien Ogier’s incident and tell us how he is.

### **JC:**

We had a mixed day. Sébastien and Julien went off, but they are okay. They went for a standard check in the hospital, but they got released immediately, so they are okay and they wanted to drive tomorrow, but the rollcage has a small damage and for safety reasons, you are not allowed to drive anymore if that is the case. They will be spectating tomorrow. What happened is that they were a bit too fast in one corner that was sixth gear flat and there was a jump, but they jumped further than they wanted and they lost the car and went into the rails and under the rails and into a ditch.

### **Q:**

You have got three fantastic drivers in your team, but Jari-Matti has had the most incredible rally so far. He has been under your wing now for 18 months and he has come on greatly. If we talk about his performance here, tell us about Jari-Matti, he is in great shape with Volkswagen, he is so happy, he is so content, he is so relaxed... Tell us how you have managed that.

### **JC:**

We always believed in Jari-Matti, that is why he came to the team. Last year, he had a big disadvantage in testing compared to Sébastien, I think 10,000 kilometres less. Last year, he did all the rallies and doing them for the second time, he has all the experience and he could adjust the Polo to his needs. In Finland, I think he did the best rally ever. There was such a big pressure and he could stand this pressure. I thought it would take a while before he could do such a good rally again, but here, it looks like he is doing even a better rally. He never won a Tarmac rally and I think he is now in a very good position to win his first Tarmac rally. His mental strength is fantastic and he did a fantastic performance today. He is in a very good mood.

### **Q:**

Jost, this is your home rally, traditionally the most difficult one for any driver to win and also for any team to win. Are you going to give us a prediction for tomorrow for yourself?

### **JC:**

It is difficult to predict anything. As you said, a home rally is very difficult and that is what we faced last year. We didn’t have the result last year and this year, we really wanted to show the fans that we can do a very good home rally. Jari-Matti is in a very good position, but in rallying, anything can happen and it is not over before it is over, so we try hard and Jari-Matti



will be very focussed tomorrow to try to keep his advantage till the end, but he has to stay very focussed and drive his speed, and then we hope he can stay where he is.

**Q:**

Yves, tell us about Kris Meeke please. It has been a fantastic event for him and you have supported him all the way. He is your protégé and at this level of the sport, it has been amazing. Give us the story from today. You must be so happy.

**YM:**

Yes, for sure we are very happy and not only today. Since the beginning of the rally, he has been doing a really good job. We were not thinking that he is a Tarmac driver, but since he has been doing juniors with us, he showed us that he is very fast on Tarmac and today, he did a great job. A great battle with Thierry, who came back very close, and on the last stage, he did a really good Panzerplatte and I hope he can stay like that tomorrow.

**Q:**

He answered a great pressure from Thierry today. Are your instructions to him: 'Just go for it, take the fight to Thierry, keep in the battle, you never know what will happen in this event'? Is the instruction just 'Go for it', or has he got something in reserve?

**YM:**

We had the same battle last year between Dani and Thierry and we stayed in front and we hope to stay in front this year also.

**Q:**

Michel, it's been a great day for your team. It was a tough day yesterday, things didn't look perfect, but today, it all just came together for your drivers, slogging it out together and Thierry making this incredible advance throughout the morning and then maintaining it in the afternoon, not quite getting to second place which we know he was targeting for sure, but what is your feeling? Is it full attack or are we just trying to hold back, still building and learning the team?

**MN:**

Well, I think you have to ask him afterwards. I hope it is full attack. No, I think he kept a bit of safety, but of course, it is a really good day, a fantastic day. Thierry did a very good job because all day long, he never gave up. I think tomorrow we will have a very good fight and let's see what happen. Dani was a bit unlucky, he nearly went off, but he didn't lose too much time, so we are pleased to have the two cars in these positions. It is the first time for Hyundai and it has been a very good day.

**Q:**

Let's also not forget that this is also for 50 percent your home rally. Are there any nerves in the team for that? We know that Jost is knowing that it is his home rally, but this is also 50 percent your home rally, you are based in Frankfurt. Have I just added a new element for you to make you nervous?

**MN:**

Yes, it is true, it is a little bit of a home rally and we will do and try our best.

**Q:**

Malcolm, over to you. A sting of fastest times from Robert Kubica today. There may be a road advantage in that, too, but let's talk about your young driver, Elfyn Evans, slogging it out once again. Everybody really battling away, but Mikko and Elfyn fighting away together, that's an incredible step that young Elfyn has made, and the confidence, you can feel it.

**MW:**

Yes, there is no question. It's Elfyn's first real Tarmac rally in a WRC car and to do the performance that he is doing against the likes of Mikko who has been here for the last nine years and who has been down Baumholder I don't know how many times. The way he is



doing it, he is just so comfortable and the positive thing for me is that he is very confident about where he is still losing time, so that sent out a great message to me that there is more to come. He has had two great days and some of his split sector times have been very good, so it is really pleasing to see. He is doing a great job.

**Q:**

He just seems much more confident. What kind of strategy do you do to develop that or does it come naturally?

**MW:**

With any of these young drivers, we always try to encourage them to relax and enjoy the driving. If the driver is under pressure, you never get the best out of him, so it is important that at this point in their career, they are relaxed and if I believe that that is the case, the rest will come.

**Q:**

Jari-Matti, we can only start with you. It has been an incredible rally. Can I say you have driven faultlessly? Tell us how you have driven.

**J-ML:**

Let's say it this way: I started quite hard on Friday morning, pushing as much as I can. Also in the afternoon when Sébastien went off, and I backed off a little bit, but I have been trying to drive with good grip sections, I have been trying to go with the good speed, the normal speed, but then it was a little bit slippery, so I have been taking a little more care. To be honest, I had a little moment at Panzerplatte today the first time through. That would not have needed, but everything was luckily okay.

**Q:**

Kris, an incredible day, an incredible fight, you are never going to get this easy, are you? You have to fight every inch of the way. Thierry looked like he was going to catch up, you answered on the last two stages, Panzerplatte is your place. Tell us about your day.

**KM:**

We started off this morning. Thierry obviously had something nice for breakfast this morning. He was incredibly fast, right from the beginning and I couldn't match his times on the first loop. Then, on the second loop, I was going really well on the first stage, but unfortunately, we had a puncture three or four kilometres from the finish. I lost three or four seconds. The next stage was incredibly wet and Thierry had an incredible time. I couldn't match it again. Then at Baumholder, I was able to get some time back. I was more happy with my own performance, irrespective of the times, because it is a place I have never actually found a good rhythm in. It is such a unique place to drive a rally car. This evening, everything came together and it clicked and I found a really good rhythm in the stage, so I was really happy and I am building my experience as I go.

**Q:**

Kris, can you explain what you are going to manage tomorrow in the vineyard stages? You weren't sure of Baumholder, but it came good for you today. The vineyards tomorrow, is that your place?

**KM:**

I don't know. I said all day today: If Thierry continues to get stronger, I wasn't going to risk everything to match him. I haven't got a contract in place for next year yet, so I am not prepared to risk everything and throw everything away just for a second place. Some day, I would like to win a rally, but Jari is doing an incredible job and even today cruising, he was still able to set the fastest time, but we will see tomorrow. It will be interesting if there is three seconds in it. I will do my best, but if Thierry goes faster, that's okay by me.



**Q:**

Thierry, over to you. An incredible day as we have already mentioned. What did you have for breakfast?

**TN:**

Yes, a good question! I definitely will take the same tomorrow morning. I had some good eggs and some pancake, so probably it was the pancake that made me go fast today. A good start for us into the day. My engineer made some changes on the car this morning because we expected horrible conditions, which was the case, and I felt really comfortable in the car, so I decided to push from the beginning. I wanted to catch Dani, but I wasn't sure if I could get close to Kris, but seeing the split times in the stage, I knew we got a nice rhythm and were getting close to second place. I kept pushing all day and Kris had an incredible run on the last stage at Panzerplatte, so he took some time out of me, but I wasn't able to go faster.

**Q:**

Jari-Matti told us that he had one moment on the rally. You already had your moment on the shakedown. Has it really interfered with anything? The pace is incredible, you are pushing incredibly hard, did you have any moments you can share with us?

**TN:**

First of all, I can't stop saying that I am really happy that I am able to be part of the rally, because my mechanics did an incredible job after my six rolls on the shakedown, which was a bit unlucky, but a mistake from my side. Thanks to them again, they worked like 19 hours flat-out to put out the car and they did an incredible job. If you see the car, it looks like new, so thank you again and now, I think, we are going to continue like this. We are going to try now to bring back a good result for the team with two cars in the top five. That would be an amazing result for Hyundai this weekend. I am definitely going to try tomorrow to put pressure on Kris, but he gets more and more experience as well, he is resisting under pressure more and more, so I think it is going to be difficult, but I will try my best.

**Q:**

So now I am going to ask what might become a traditional question from me on the Saturday night press conference. Jari-Matti, first of all, who is going to win the rally?

**J-ML:**

For me, it would be very important that it would be a Volkswagen driver and a Finn, so...

**Q:**

Kris, same question to you, who is going to win this rally?

**KM:**

We have seen last year that anything can happen right till the end. It is so simple on these stages. If you are five centimetres off line, everything is finished, very quickly, as Thierry found out on the shakedown, so anything can happen, but to be honest, Jari has been incredible in Finland, he has been sublime here, even in his road position on day one, for me he was the fastest driver and I personally would like to see Jari win it, but you never know what can happen.

**Q:**

That's very generous, so we'll re-phrase that question for you, Kris: Who is going to be second, then?

**KM:**

Probably a red car.

**Q:**

So, Thierry, we ask you the same question: Who is going to win this rally?

**TN:**



I have to be honest: Jari-Matti really deserves to win this weekend. Putting Sébastien Ogier under pressure that he goes off the road twice in a rally, we have never seen this, so he really deserves to win the rally. He had an unbelievable pace the first day and even today setting fastest times, so congrats to him for doing such a good job and I hope he can run tomorrow without any trouble and bring victory home for Volkswagen.

**Q:**

One more for Jari?

**J-ML:**

Yes, I also wanted to say thank you to the boys. They have been doing really well. In these conditions, it is not easy to drive and the fight they are doing, it is really good job for both of them. Like Kris mentioned, tomorrow is still one day to go. Of course, I want to win, but really concentration and focus is what I need. Nothing is over until the finish line.