



MEET THE CREWS SESSION DAY 1 – 21.08.2015

Present:

Jost Capito, Volkswagen Motorsport
Michel Nandan, Hyundai Motorsport
Malcolm Wilson, M-Sport World Rally Team
Marek Nawarecki, Citroën Total Abu Dhabi World Rally Team
Sébastien Ogier, Volkswagen Motorsport
Jari-Matti Latvala, Volkswagen Motorsport
Andreas Mikkelsen, Volkswagen Motorsport

Q:

Jost, a great opening day for Volkswagen in the ADAC Rallye Deutschland, with a clean sweep of the top three for your drivers after today's stages. You must be a happy man...

JC:

Yes, you can definitely say so. It couldn't have been any better for us. Our guys did a tremendous job, they were quick from the word go and dominated proceedings. Everyone knows the significance of this event for us, and to start it off like this is making me very happy. On the other hand, we shouldn't get carried away, it is only the opening day, but this is very good for starters. There was just one blot on the copybook, with Dani Sordo's third-fastest time on the final stage. Had it not been for that, we would have locked out the top three in all of today's stages.

Q:

What about your general impression of the first day, has it been good so far here in Germany?

JC:

Yes, it is a fantastic event, it is fantastically organised, a German organisation (laughs). There are lots of fans, and also very disciplined fans, as I hear from the stages, so it is going very well. Also the weather is fine and it should stay all weekend, so it is great for the fans, who can see a big and very exciting rally. And the guys here, Sébastien and Jari-Matti, they kept my blood pressure high all day and for sure they will keep it high for tomorrow and Sunday, for the rest of the rally!

Q:

Michel, you are in fourth and fifth position, you have four drivers here in total: Sordo, Neuville, Abbring, Paddon, so a busy weekend for you guys.

MN:

Yes, that is true. Four cars, for the second time this season, is not so easy, but we try to manage.

Q:

At the end of the day today, Dani Sordo put himself into third position in the stage classification, Jost mentioned it, spoiling the Volkswagen 1-2-3, which have gone all day. Was that a bit of Hyundai strategy, Michel?

MN:

Well, Elfyn did it first and then we were second.

Q:

It has been a good performance by Dani and by Thierry, they are battling away at each other.

MN:



Yes, they are battling and I am bit scared about that, but we try also to manage that. I think it was a good day, we are fourth and fifth, so that is good for us. We know anyway that we can't fight with these guys. It is good, Thierry and Dani did good stages and Hayden did some good times as well. We know that he is not really used to tarmac, but he is starting to show that he is getting used to tarmac, which is good for us.

Q:

He sounded pretty frustrated, because he wanted to fight with Neuville and with Sordo, as that's where he has been all year. How do you calm his frustration?

MN:

I think he has to try a bit more on tarmac, which is a different way of driving. He knows he has to improve it and I think it will come step by step, but he has to wait a bit.

Q:

Let's turn to Malcolm Wilson now. We have seen some strong times coming through from Elfyn and from Ott today, but Ott got off to a dramatic start, a bit of a moment on the opening stage. Were you worried?

MW:

Yes, I think it was a follow-on from Finland, a similar sort of mistake. The car looked a lot worse than what it was. Fortunately, there was no suspension damage or anything like that, but it was quite a big impact and we were concerned, but fortunately he was able to get through the rest of the day without any issue.

Q:

The pace has been there from both of them, but were you expecting more?

MW:

Yes, I have to say that we were expecting more. As you say, they have both been competitive in different points, but there hasn't been a consistency, so hopefully, they can regroup tonight and start to apply some pressure. Fourth place at the moment is not out of the question and hopefully they can apply some more pressure to Michel's boys tomorrow.

Q:

When a football team is not doing well, you can imagine the manager going in at half-time and give them a right talking-to. Is that what you will do with the boys tonight? Do you think they need a good talking-to?

MW:

Yes, I think they do, actually, and I will have a chat with the pair of them tonight.

Q:

Can we have a little bit of a sample of what you are going to say, or are you keeping it a secret?

MW:

No, I won't be throwing my trainers at them, or the hairdryer, or whatever it is.

Q:

So, let's turn to Marek now. Marek, we have seen Kris Meeke over the course of the season being very much the man to rival the Volkswagens. He has been the one who has been closest, and today was no exception, but unfortunately, it has gone wrong for Kris. What happened?

MN:

Yes, it is through that from the beginning of this rally, especially this morning, Kris had a very good pace and from the Volkswagen competitors, so it was quite good, but unfortunately, on the sixth stage, he made a mistake. He went out on the field and a few kilometres later, probably the front suspension was damaged and he needed to finish the stage and to try to repair the suspension. Unfortunately, he lost a lot of time, so it will be very difficult or even impossible to compete, but of course, he will continue tomorrow.

Q:



What about Mads? We have seen him more on the pace in previous events, but he just didn't seem to get into it today.

MN:

Yes, for Mads, it was difficult from the beginning, especially stage one and two. During the day, he continued to improve. He changed a little bit to the settings of his car at the service and this afternoon, he did a little better. I think that Mads will try to continue to improve his pace tomorrow, but it is not easy for him as well, but he can still gain some positions.

Q:

It has been a cracking day, Séb. We have seen some fantastic pace on tarmac. I love the tarmac-spec cars and it has gone great for Volkswagen so far. How are you feeling?

SO:

So far, it is the perfect podium for Volkswagen and if we can keep it like that until Sunday, it would be amazing, that would correct, at least partly, for all the mistakes that happened in the past. But obviously, we have done only one day, we have to stay calm and the longest day of the rally is tomorrow with very long stages. We know that a lot of things can happen in Baumholder, but speaking of today, I am really happy. It has been a long time that I haven't really pushed a bit on tarmac. The last time was probably here last year, where it only lasted a few stages and then I went off. Then in France I had some trouble last year and I wasn't in the race anymore, in Spain I had to control just to try to secure the title. This time, it is a different story and I have known for some time now that Jari is really fast on this surface, so it is not an easy job to make the difference, but we had a great approach today. This morning was a good loop with some good times, but I was not entirely happy, not really comfortable in the car. I managed to find it a little bit better in the afternoon and the times were following, so I am happy with the start of the rally and happy to be at the end of day one of the ADAC Rallye Deutschland.

Q:

Two challenging days ahead, you have built up a nice little lead, but still not too much, and as you said, Jari-Matti is very quick here. How are you feeling about the time that you have in hand and how much of your maximum will you show us tomorrow?

SO:

I think that it is better to have 9.5 seconds in the lead than to be second, so I am happy with that. For sure, it is not much and it is definitely not enough to start cruising now, but I am confident. Like I said before the rally, I have a good feeling for this weekend. I am feeling very well in the car and I had a good test, in Baumholder and on the normal stages in the vineyards, so I think I can do it. It won't be easy, I know that Jari likes the military camp and for sure, he will try there, but I just have to continue the same way, stay out of trouble, out of puncture problems in Baumholder. Up to this moment, I have really been enjoying the ADAC Rallye Deutschland this year.

Q:

Jari-Matti, you are looking quite focussed this evening. You have been leading the rally today. It was a slim lead earlier on, a tenth of a second over Séb, but still, it was the lead, and then, this afternoon, you started to lose a little bit more time than we were expecting maybe. Why?

J-ML:

Séb was having a great afternoon, a lot of respect to him. He drove really well. I also drove well, but maybe I was a bit too cautious in the cuts in the dirty areas. I didn't find the confidence to push over there, so I backed off a little bit and then you see it straight away in the times you are losing, and I was losing because of that, but otherwise, I am happy with the day. The morning was good, the car is behaving well, it is more about having confidence all the time. Now, at the end of the day, the feeling on the last stage was very good and we tried to improve the braking for tomorrow. Overall, like Séb mentioned, I am looking forward to the Panzerplatte tomorrow.



Q:

Yes, you like the military area. Why do you like that section so much?

J-ML:

Because you can't cut because of the 'hinkelsteins' (laughs). I know how a 'hinkelstein' feels, so I have a little respect for them. And then you can pick up more lines and you can brake to the apex, you have some long corners where you brake to the apex and you accelerate out of there. In the vineyards, it is so narrow, you always have to brake and then you speed out and go to the junction. You can't pick up any line, you just follow the road, but tomorrow, at Panzerplatte, you can pick up the line. It is more like racing lines.

Q:

Volkswagen want a really good result here, this is good for the team right now, but you want to win. How much are you prepared to risk to do that?

J-ML:

It is depending on Jost Capito! If he gives me the permission, that is fine.

Q:

So, Jost, can he fight?

JC:

Yes, I need to keep up my blood pressure and for sure, Jari-Matti will do this.

Q:

Andreas, today, the Volkswagen drivers have set a 1-2-3 on every single stage, bar the final stage, where you messed up, according to Jost.

AM:

Yes, we are having really big problems at Volkswagen these days. To be honest, it has been a good day for me as well. Obviously, before the service, it was hard to get into a rhythm on tarmac, but in the afternoon, we were quite fast, almost as fast as Sébastien and Jari-Matti. Then, Kris Meeke went off, so I had a margin of 30 seconds. Obviously, it was too far in front to try to catch them, because that would mean going flat-out everywhere and I don't want to risk so much, so I took it a bit more steady and that showed in my stage times. Sorry about that last stage!

Q:

Tomorrow, you venture out into the military ranges, how much are you looking forward to that?

AM:

Yes, I am really looking forward. Obviously, a 30 seconds' lead is great to get into tomorrow and it's too much time to catch for me compared to these two guys, so I will try to find a rhythm and just enjoy.

Q:

Finally back to Jost. Let's make sure we get this clear now. These are the 1-2. You really want to win. You're going to let them fight, though, yes?

JC:

Yes, of course, because they know what they are doing. If I slow them down, they make mistakes, I am sure.

Q:

Séb, do you agree? Will you make mistakes if he slows you down? Well, he will not slow you down, you are in the lead.

SO:

The only sentence he said before the rally was: 'Think, you remember all what you said at the end of last year to Mr. Winterkorn', who is the head of the Volkswagen Group, and then he just told us: 'You promised him that you are going to be much better in Deutschland, so I don't have to say anything more'.