



END OF DAY “MEET THE CREWS” SESSION DAY 1

Present:

Yves Matton, Citroën Total World Rally Team
Benoit Nogier, Citroën Junior World Rally Team
Malcolm Wilson, Ford World Rally Team

Sébastien Loeb, Citroën Total World Rally Team
Petter Solberg, Ford World Rally Team
Jari-Matti Latvala, Ford World Rally Team

Q:

It's been a great day here in Germany today. Sebastien Loeb holds a lead of 20 seconds now. How confident are you feeling?

YM:

I am feeling very confident, but there is a long way to go. Sebastien was also leading after the first day last year but he did not finish first.

Q:

We have a huge day tomorrow with the military stages but Loeb seems very relaxed out there. But the Fords are very much on pace? Jari-Matti set some fastest times today. Are you concerned at all?

YM:

Yes, I think that Sebastien did a great job. But the Fords are also really fast at the moment.

Q:

Mikko Hirvonen is not quite on pace at the moment. We have seen him slowly drop down the leader board. Why is that? Why is he not finding the right rhythm?

YM:

He is not a hundred percent confident. Testing is different from competing. He has to forget the old car and get used to the new one.

Q:

Ford's very much on pace this time in Germany. Petter Solberg is in second position and Jari-Matti Latvala is in third. We've seen some fastest times from him today. What more can they do tomorrow?

MW:

We have to carry on. Some hiccups cost us a little bit of time. But we are delighted with the car, the pace and the guys. To come here on Seb's territory and show such a performance makes us happy. We have to keep up the pressure tomorrow. We are doing here what we should have done in Finland.

Q:

What will you have to do to catch Seb? How much of a risk will you have to take?

MW:

I think the record of Sebastian on this event tells us that it's going to be very difficult. We'll try and stay in this window. So if something does happen, we are ready to capitalize on it. At the moment we are very happy, but Panzerplatte will be a difficult stage. 2004 was the last time



that Seb, apart from last year, was beaten here on Tarmac. That was done by Marko Martin. We know that it is not an easy task, but we'll just keep the pressure.

Q:

Let's talk about Thierry Neuville. He is in fourth position overall now. It's the first time really for him in a WRC car. Last time we have seen him in a Super 1600 car. What have you thought?

BN:

Tarmac is a bit more natural for him. It is a long way to go.

Q:

We thought really that Thierry could catch Jari-Matti Latvala on the middle stage today, when Jari-Matti lost some time. Will a podium finish be possible?

BN:

Everything is possible, as Petter would say. It will be very difficult to catch the factory drivers. It is always very difficult, but we will see.

Q:

Sebastien, this is as usual. End of day one of the Rallye Deutschland and you are in the lead. How do you think the day has gone out there? Are you pleased with your performance?

SL:

For sure I'm pleased. We are leading. 20 seconds is a good lead at the end of day one. Petter and Jari-Matti were also pushing hard and the times were sometimes very close. I made no mistake. It was dry so it was a bit less tricky than we had expected in the morning. I will put a bit of extra power into tomorrow's stages. It was really a perfect day.

Q:

The guys did get very close to you. We have seen some fastest times by Jari-Matti Latvala. Are you feeling any pressure at all?

SL:

You cannot be fastest all the time. The others are not sleeping. They are going very fast. They set some good times but we were never too far.

Q:

What about tomorrow? We have a difficult day tomorrow in the military region at Baumholder. That could be very tricky.

SL:

It will be very long. Last year it was even too long. We could not push for 40 km with the tyres we had. This time have to look after the tyres. For me it would be more interesting to have two shorter stages, but okay, on the 47 km stage it will be important to make it to the finish.

Q:

Petter, Sebastien seems very calm and collected. 20 seconds between you, how are you feeling at the end of the day?

PS:

First of all Loeb always seems calm. We lost a bit of time in the morning but in the afternoon we did well. We drove consistently and we did not make any mistakes. Of course tomorrow will be a big day. But I am aware that a lot of things can happen. Sebastien had a puncture last year so anything can happen. I am just very happy that both Fords are on the podium at the end of this day. We deserve it.

Q:

How much extra pressure can you put onto Sebastien? Were you taking risks out there?



PS:

I haven't taken any risks but I know that Latvala had a few big moments. I just built up good confidence. I did a few days of testing, but I need a little bit more time in the car to be able to attack. I am happy, however, that we could make some improvements on the car before the rally.

Q:

Jari-Matti, we saw some great times from you today. That must make you feel good.

JML:

Seb was consistent today, I was not. The reasons were that I had two very big moments, I was basically off the road but I managed to get back on the track again. We just backed off a bit to get the confidence back but we backed off a bit too much on stage five. The car is fast and we have all the elements to fight but obviously Loeb is a very strong man to beat.

Q:

You described the Panzerplatte stage as a little bit like Finland in Germany. How much are you looking forward to that and can you put extra pressure on Sebastien on that stage?

JML:

For sure it's gonna be a hard stage for the tyres, but they are generally working very well over here, also in harsh conditions. I know they will be on the limit. Anything can happen.