

Media information



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Thierry Neuville: “The ADAC Rallye Deutschland is my home rally.”

- **An interview with Thierry Neuville, 2014 winner of the German WRC event**
- **Neuville to start in the ADAC TCR at Nurburgring the weekend before the ADAC Rallye Deutschland**

Munich. Based on fan numbers alone, Thierry Neuville would have been the undisputed champion of the ADAC Rallye Deutschland for years. No other WRC pro has more people cheering for him along the track than the 31-year-old from St. Vith in the German-speaking part of Belgium. His motorsport breakthrough came in 2014, when he won the German WRC event and ascended to the ranks of the rally elite. At this year's ADAC Rallye Deutschland from 22 to 25 August, the crowd favourite will be among the top contenders again. As a sort of “warm-up exercise”, Neuville will start as a VIP guest driver in the ADAC TCR Germany supporting the ADAC GT MASTERS at Nurburgring in a Hyundai i30 N TCR the weekend before. In the interview below, the Belgian explains what he likes especially about the ADAC Rallye Deutschland.

Mr Neuville, what is the first thing that comes to mind when you hear ADAC Rallye Deutschland?

My home rally – that's what the ADAC Rallye Deutschland means to me. St. Vith is only 80km away from the rally region. There are always many fans from Belgium to support us. It's a rally I've always liked a lot, where I've always been very fast and where I've fought for a spot on the podium almost every year. Plus, it's the rally where I achieved my first WRC victory. That brings back fond memories. I love the vineyards. It's a beautiful setting – especially when the sun shines. The atmosphere is fantastic. Many spectators, great stages, Baumholder, Panzerplatte – those are my initial thoughts.

What do you like especially about this rally?

It's a very challenging rally. First of all, there are the Special Stages in the Mosel vineyards and in the Saarland region, which differ considerably. And then, of course, there is the infamous Panzerplatte, where you zoom through the military range. That's something really special, which is unique to the ADAC Rallye Deutschland. It's a lot of fun, too.

The battle for the WRC title is tighter than it has been for a long time. So, what is the right mix between attacking and trying to make it safely to the finish in this situation at the ADAC Rallye Deutschland?

At the ADAC Rallye Deutschland, you have to attack right from the start. You can't just try to make it safely to the finish here. It's like a sprint event for us. Except for the long Panzerplatte SS, most sections are rather short, so you really have to go full attack. Even though new elements and variations keep being added, most top drivers know the tracks very well, because they have driven them in various directions over the years. This means you can go very close to the limit. And you have to if you want to do well here.

The Power Stage of the ADAC Rallye Deutschland will take place in the vineyards this year. What do you think does that mean in terms of action and excitement?

Last year, we were also in the vineyards on the final day. The Power Stage there will certainly be a challenge. Driving through the vineyards is tough. It's so easy to take a wrong turn there. The roads are narrow, and visibility is quite low for us drivers because of the constant changes from right to left and the vineyards limiting our field of vision.

Media information



Which Special Stage do you recommend to the fans? What's your tip for spectators?

The Baumholder military range is the place to go on Saturday. You can see each car passing through there several times. And there are always major support events and plenty of other thrills to experience. A good show, great atmosphere, lots of people. And if the sun shines, too, it's just absolutely wonderful for the spectators. My friends and family have also told me time and again that Baumholder is a highlight. On Friday and Sunday, the vineyard stages will probably be the most interesting items on the agenda.

Where and when is the best opportunity for fans to take a selfie with you at the ADAC Rallye Deutschland?

Actually, my advice would be between the Special Stages, i.e. when we stop to change tyres or regroup. That's when the spectators can get really close to us. Of course, we don't have much time, but that's where the fans stand their best chances. At the Service Park, we are usually very busy discussing the setup for the afternoon or the next day with our engineers.

You became a father a few weeks ago. Will this give you an extra boost of motivation for your "home rally"?

I'm always motivated. And willing to do my best. But it's true: being a father – that's the beginning of a new phase in my life. But I think we will be able to manage quite well. Things can only get better. It will definitely not make me drive more defensively.

Where will your family be watching the ADAC Rallye Deutschland?

Well, my family will come and watch the rally. They usually travel with the fan club. However, we generally don't see much of each other during a WRC event of this type, because I'm just too busy. But it's really nice for me, of course, to join my family soon after.

The weekend before the ADAC Rallye Deutschland, you will start as a guest driver in a Hyundai i30 N TCR in the ADAC TCR at Nurburgring. How do your WRC car and your TCR vehicle differ?

The touring car is much closer to the production car than the WRC car, which is much more extreme. Both vehicles are a lot of fun to drive, though, and are winners in their respective classes. The WRC car has a four-wheel drive with an adjustable centre differential, approx. 400hp and more special aerodynamics while the Hyundai i30 N TCR is less powerful and has a front-wheel drive. Plus, the rally car is designed to be fast on a great variety of surfaces – be it gravel, snow or asphalt. Therefore, its concept is completely different from the touring car.

Get your rally and day passes in pre-sale now!

Passes to the ADAC Rallye Deutschland are available at www.adac.de/rallye-deutschland. The official online ticket shop sells both four-day rally and day passes. ADAC members pay €65 for a pre-sale rally pass (€70 for non-members). The rally pass package is available at an extra €5 and, among other things, includes the pass and the official rally magazine. During the ADAC Rallye Deutschland, the regular price for a rally pass will be €80 at all on-site sales points. Day passes (for Thursday, Friday, Saturday or Sunday) are available exclusively on pre-sale and start at €25.

The rally pass package includes:

- Access to all Special Stages on all days
- Access to the Service Park on all days

Media information



- Access to the Shakedown on Thursday
- A spectator map providing all the essential information about the rally
- ADAC Rallye Deutschland lanyard
- ADAC Rallye Deutschland sticker
- ADAC Rallye Deutschland magazine (in German with essential information in English and French)

ADAC Rallye Deutschland information:

The ADAC Rallye Deutschland has a unique worldwide reputation. Its mix of hairpin stages in the vineyards, tough tracks on the Baumholder tank range and fast asphalt roads presents extreme challenges for both the teams and the drivers. Excellent driving skills and versatility are of the essence here. Diversity, high-class action and closeness to the fans are the ingredients that make the ADAC Rallye Deutschland such an attractive package for spectators as well. Year after year, this major event draws enthusiastic crowds from all over Europe, giving it a special, international atmosphere.

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