



FEDERATION INTERNATIONALE DE L'AUTOMOBILE

2019 FIA WORLD RALLY CHAMPIONSHIP

RALLY MONTE-CARLO

Post-event Press Conference
27 January 2019

Present:

1st – Sébastien Ogier, Citroën Total WRT
1st – Julien Ingrassia, Citroën Total WRT
2nd – Thierry Neuville, Hyundai Shell Mobis WRT
2nd – Nicolas Gilsoul, Hyundai Shell Mobis WRT
3rd – Ott Tänak, Toyota Gazoo Racing WRT
3rd – Martin Järveoja, Toyota Gazoo Racing WRT
Pierre Budar, Team Principal, Citroën Total WRT

Q:

Congratulations on sealing the first win of the season and claiming Citroën's 100th WRC victory; what a thriller the final day has been. What was the feeling at the stage end when you realised you'd clinched the win?

SO:

I will say this is a very nice symbol on top of the cake, but for sure the most important thing is to start the season this way. There are not too many people betting on me, even though I win many times. It's never easy to start with a new car. I am very pleased – I think you have seen that at the end of the last stage.

Q

Félicitation pour cette victoire qui ouvre le championnat et qui est la centième pour Citroën en rallye ; quel suspens au cours de ce dernier jour . Qu'avez-vous ressenti à la fin de la spéciale quand vous réalisez que vous aviez décroché la victoire ?

SO

C'est un beau symbole ! C'est surtout la meilleure façon de commencer la saison !
Pas grand monde aurait parié sur moi pour la victoire, même si j'ai gagné de nombreuses fois ici.
Ce n'est jamais facile de débiter avec une nouvelle voiture.
Évidemment, je suis très heureux et cela a dû se voir à la fin de la dernière spéciale.

Q:

You were quite emotional, that's rare...

SO:

It is rare. It makes me happy. It's not too many times [especially in the early stages of my career] I was not enjoying enough. This one I enjoy. And it's thanks to him (Thierry Neuville) and Nicolas [Gilsoul]. At the end of this kind of fight it brings a bigger emotion and the anticipation adds to that and it comes out at the final stop point. There was a lot of emotion.

Q

Vous étiez très ému à la fin du rallye, c'est assez rare de votre part...

SO

Oui c'est vrai, cette victoire m'a rendu heureux, car parfois, même souvent, dans ma carrière je n'ai pas assez apprécié ces moments.

Cette victoire je la savoure, aussi grâce à Thierry (Neuville) et Nicolas (Gilsoul), car après une telle bagarre et un tel suspense qui durent jusqu'à la fin de la dernière spéciale c'est toujours une plus grande émotion.

C'est différent quand vous menez un rallye avec une avance confortable, vous rentrez dans la gestion de votre course et l'émotion n'est pas la même. Il y a eu une énorme émotion.

Q:

You had a throttle issue today, when did you discover that? Did you think it would spoil the party?

SO:

Actually it started yesterday night on the road section and I started to get a strange reaction on the throttle when I was lifting – the car was going on with 20 per cent of pedal. It was not so nice, especially on stage mode. It could be tricky, we tried to check everything we could – it looks like a sensor is a bit crazy. Luckily it was still working some times, but it can catch you by surprise, so it's also dangerous. Finally, we managed some small fix, it was not 100 per cent but at least we could finish the rally and give a last push on the power stage to keep the win. It was another busy day for my heart! The win was difficult to reach but also I didn't know if I would finish. The sensor could be gone and this would be a bigger drama and that also adds to the emotion.

Q

Vous avez eu un problème d'accélérateur aujourd'hui, quand l'avez-vous découvert ? Avez-vous pensé que cela allait gâcher la course?

SO

En réalité le problème a commencé hier soir sur le routier en descendant à Monaco.

Il s'agissait d'un problème de capteur d'accélérateur, l'accélérateur restait enfoncé au levé de pied, ce qui n'est pas très sécurisant. Cela pouvait devenir piégeux, nous avons vérifié tout ce que nous avons pu-cela semblait être un capteur. Heureusement il fonctionnait de temps en temps, mais il pouvait se mettre en panne de façon aléatoire, donc c'était dangereux.

Finalement, on a réussi une réparation de fortune, ce n'était pas du 100% mais au moins on a pu finir le rallye et tout donner dans la power stage pour garder la victoire.

C'était encore un jour pénible pour mon cœur ! La victoire a été difficile à aller chercher mais en plus je ne savais même pas si j'allais pouvoir finir.

Le capteur aurait pu lâcher et cela aurait tourné au drame d'où mon intense émotion.

Q:

What was that final stage like?

SO:

I did a good final stage. I tried to push. It's difficult to push more than 100 per cent in a new car. I know Citroen is good in these conditions, but it reacts different to the one (car) I was used to in the last years. I gave everything I had. Kris [Meeke] was even faster, but this doesn't matter – in this moment, it's enough to win the rally. It's great to start with Citroen this way.

Q:

Comment était la dernière spéciale?

SO:

J'ai fait une bonne spéciale. J'ai essayé d'attaquer. C'est difficile de pousser à plus de 100% avec une nouvelle voiture. Je sais que la Citroen est performante dans ces conditions, mais elle (la voiture) réagit différemment de celles que j'avais les années précédentes. J'ai tout

donné. Kris [Meeke] a été plus rapide, mais ce n'est pas grave— a cet instant, cela suffit pour gagner le rallye. C'est super de démarrer de cette façon avec Citroen.

Q:

Julien, you and Seb have had such a successful run at this event and now join Walter Röhrl in becoming the only crew to win the event with four manufacturers. A big achievement!

Jl:

Yeah, but you see it takes a few seconds to wonder if we did it. You look for people and their reaction. When I saw Seb's dad smile and I knew it's done, then there was a big emotion. Everything was brand new, but in the end it's many years that I've been missing a bit of Sunday, time when I would maybe go to church. My hair starts to be a bit white with these kind of rallies...

Q:

Julien, vous et Seb have avaient un parcours jalonné de succès sur cette épreuve et vous rejoignaient Walter Röhrl en devenant le seul équipage à gagner cette épreuve sur quatre marques différentes. Un bel accomplissement!

Jl:

Oui, mais cela a pris quelques secondes pour y croire. Vous regardez les gens et leurs réactions. Quand j'ai vu le père de Seb sourire, j'ai su qu'on avait gagné, après il y a eu une grosse émotion. Tout était nouveau, mais en fin de compte cela fait bien longtemps que je n'ai pas eu de vrais dimanches, des dimanches où vous pouvez aller à l'église. Mes cheveux commencent à devenir blancs avec ce genre de rallyes...

SO:

Mine is even more white!

SO:

Les miens sont encore plus blancs!

Jl:

If people were wondering if this season would be the same challenge and as exciting, I think they have their answer straight away.

Jl:

Si les gens se demandaient si cette saison, aussi, allait être disputée et excitante, je crois qu'ils tiennent leur réponse .

Q:

And good to be back with Citroen?

Jl:

I'm very happy with this new challenge and to be together with this team after we had some nice success with Malcolm [Wilson, M-Sport]. Now we turn the page and if I think of Citroen in terms of life, it was so long time ago and so much has happened in our careers since 2011. I'm with a new team and we have to write a new page of our history together.

Q:

Content d'être de retour chez Citroen?

Jl:

Je suis très heureux de ce nouveau challenge et d'être avec ce team après avoir connu quelques beaux succès avec Malcolm [Wilson, M-Sport]. Aujourd'hui, nous tournons la page et je pense à ce que Citroen a apporté à ma vie, c'était il y a très longtemps et tant de choses sont arrivées dans nos carrières depuis 2011. Je suis avec un nouveau team et nous devons écrire ensemble une nouvelle page de notre histoire.

Q:

Thierry, we've seen a flat out fight from you but it wasn't quite enough to catch Seb. Great points on the board to start the season though.

TN:

This time we found somebody stronger. If I remember back in Sardinia, we were able to win the challenge, but this time it was a bit more difficult. This morning we were more than four seconds [behind] and I expect them to be fast on such roads. We closed the gap and put pressure on him, but the result in the end is not what we wanted. But in the end, it is important points.

Q:

Thierry, nous vous avons vu vous battre « à fond » mais ce n'était pas suffisant pour rattraper Seb. De gros points tout de même pour ce début de saison.

TN:

Cette fois, on a trouvé plus fort que nous. Si je me rappelle bien, en Sardaigne nous avons remporté ce bras de fer, mais cette fois c'était plus difficile. Ce matin nous étions à plus de 4 secondes derrière lui et je le savais rapide sur de telles routes. Nous avons réduit l'écart et lui avons mis la pression, mais le résultat final n'est pas celui espéré. Finalement, c'est quand même de gros points.

Q:

What was that feeling like while you waited for him to come through?

TN:

To be honest, the feeling ahead of the stage was really good. On the previous stage the car was working so well. I had to drive and be efficient. Towards the end of the stage I struggled with the brakes. When there was a lot of grip and less ice then we see the Toyota is very strong. Crossing the line we knew probably this would not be enough, but we have to thank the gravel crew. These were such demanding conditions for us to stay on the road, but also for them to give us all the changes and not too much information. It was a good collaboration and a lot of stress.

Q:

Quel était votre sentiment quand vous attendiez son arrive à la fin de la dernière spéciale?

TN:

Honnêtement, le sentiment avant la spéciale était bon. Sur la précédente, la voiture a parfaitement fonctionné. A l'approche de la fin, je me suis battu avec des problèmes de freins. Quand il y a beaucoup de grip et moins de glace, la Toyota est très performante. A l'arrivée nous savions que ce ne serait pas suffisant, mais nous devons remercier nos ouvriers. C'étaient des conditions tellement exigeantes pour nous simplement pour rester sur la route, mais aussi pour eux qui doivent nous donner toutes les corrections sans trop nous abreuser d'informations. C'était une bonne collaboration et beaucoup de stress.

Q:

Second on the road in Sweden, how much confidence do you take to the next round?

TN:

Last year we saw the first car on the road struggled a lot. I hope the conditions can be a bit better this time. I know the main goal will be to be ahead of our main rivals.

Q:

Deuxième à partir en Suède, vous êtes confiant pour la deuxième manche en Suède ?

TN:

L'année dernière, on a vu que le premier à partir souffrait beaucoup. J'espère que les conditions seront un peu meilleures cette année. Je sais quel le but principal est d'être devant nos principaux rivaux .

Q

Nicolas, how do you feel?

NG:

For sure like everybody knows, Monte Carlo can be a very demanding rally for the co-driver, it's close to a nightmare! So much detail, sometimes you can have three lines [from the gravel crew] to add to the notes for one corner. But like Thierry said, they did a marvelous job with only sleeping for a few hours. Thanks a lot to them.

Q

Nicolas, comment vous sentez-vous?

NG:

Comme tout le monde le sait, Monte Carlo est très exigeant pour les copilotes, c'est presque un cauchemard! Tant de détails, parfois vous pouvez avoir trois lignes [des ouvreurs] à ajouter aux notes pour un seul virage. Mais comme dit Thierry, ils ont fait un travail fantastique avec en ne dormant que quelques heures. Merci à eux.

Q:

How did you perform out there? What was the experience like?

NG:

It's always the same in Monte. We stay one and a half months with no driving, so we are really excited to be back in the car. But it's so specific with the studded tyres on the dry Tarmac. We experimented, we had a stall in the road and we were lucky we were able to restart. I'm lost a little bit now...

TN:

That's a first time for him!

Q:

Ott, Thursday night you led the rally but slipped back on Friday. Saturday saw you storm to every stage win and today you blasted away the competition. Are you satisfied with your result?

OT:

I'm not sure we can say satisfied. It's been a really good event, but in the end I must say on Friday we really struggled. I'm not sure we could have gained more than what we have now, even without the puncture. Thierry and Seb do really well in the tricky conditions and then we had the cancelled stage and we wore the tyres. It was going a bit like this, then we had the puncture and it started to work against us. But no worries, since Saturday morning we had a good run and had a good feeling. The team did a great job and the car was great. We did nothing wrong, but sometimes it doesn't work perfectly and on another day it does work.

Q:

You must have been happy with yesterday's pace?

OT:

You can see the pace is there when everything works for us as it should. On Saturday we could do everything right. The tyre combination was always right and in the afternoon we did a small difference to the others. But already we were three minutes behind and 30 or 40 seconds to catch the car ahead. If it would have been the wrong choice for the tyre then we would have lost 10 or 15 seconds, but actually we gained a couple of seconds and that meant we could fight today.

Q:

You took no studs yesterday afternoon?

OT:

Yes. I got the call from my driver Martin [Kangur, ice note crew driver] and he advised: "You should try something different... there's five kilometres of ice, so if you are brave enough you could manage." OK I could be more safe, but if the weather changes we could benefit. I feel it was melting a little bit the ice, and these few seconds were exactly what we needed to keep the pressure. This is exactly what we needed.

Q:

You talked about a fancy moment in one stage, any more of those?

OT:

Yesterday went smoother, it was not an exciting moment – those kind of moments are not so enjoyable.

Q:

Martin, Saturday made Ott smile...

MJ:

He was good to begin with! This was my third Monte Carlo and it's not that kind of nightmare – I start to enjoy it. I made an offer to the promoter to make this the first and last round of the year. Maybe the gravel crew are not so happy with this...

Q:

Except for Friday, this was a good event?

MJ:

The speed was always there except Friday. But it was good to work with our engineer, who was new for us. The gravel crew did a good job. Thanks to them.

Q:

Citroen celebrates 100 years of existence and now 100 WRC wins! A successful weekend with an added slice of drama today. What does it mean to the team to achieve this victory today?

PB:

It's a nice symbol. It means first Citroen and rally are a common history. Winning 100 rallies and 100 years is something strong in the life of the brand and the history of WRC. We have a very strong link between the sport and the Citroen brand.

Q:

Seb said not lot of people bet on him – did you believe he could do it?

PB:

I think only if there was one guy betting on him, it was me – but I think I was not the only one. In the team, for sure, everybody was pushing to try to get the best car for them. They managed to deal with this new car and it was wonderful to see what they could achieve. Monte is so difficult and when you deal with this condition in a new car, it's very difficult, but I have to say I am very impressed.

Q:

How tense was the throttle problem today?

PB:

Yeah, of course it was quite difficult with no service. When we discovered this problem, we tried to do our best, but at the end of the day we couldn't do much. It's one more difficult point to deal with. It was very frustrating for us not to be able to help them and wonder if the problem would be more and more difficult or not. We were very relieved...

Q:

How would you summarise this rally?

PB:

First of all we are happy with this victory, we celebrate this and we are so happy to have Seb and Julien here. But we don't have to forget we have lot of work to do. Remember what Esapekka [Lappi] and Janne [Ferm] had. We work to fix any problems around this car today for Seb and yesterday for Esapekka. It's not only here for Monte Carlo we want to win, we have another goal for this year, I already mention the fight will be very difficult this year. We

have to make some strong work in-house – this has started already today with Esapekka's engine.

FIA WRC 2 PRO CHAMPIONSHIP

Present:

1st – Gus Greensmith, M-Sport Ford World Rally Team

1st – Elliott Edmondson, M-Sport Ford World Rally Team

Q:

Gus congratulations on your first WRC 2 Pro win. What better place to achieve your first international win than at Rallye Monte-Carlo, how are you feeling?

GG:

It was pretty good. It still hasn't not sunk in yet, I'm just processing it. I've been knocking on the door of this for a while and we missed some opportunities last year that I shouldn't have and I didn't want that to happen again. We were leading WRC 2 Pro, but that wasn't enough, I wanted to be in the overall [category] lead and take the win. From Friday I had to judge everything and it worked out perfectly and now we're in the lead of the championship.

Q:

That must be a good confidence builder?

GG:

I wasn't sure where we were going to be. This was my first time in Monte Carlo in an R5 car and we were still learning. I knew we didn't have to be fastest on every stage and that if we made no mistakes it could be good. Elliot did a brilliant job and Antoine [L'Estage] and Craig [Parry, ice note crew] did a fantastic job. We had a good gap and in the end we could cruise and bring it home today.

Q:

What was cruising like?

GG:

Yeah, I was a bit nervous. This has been such a long time coming, this morning was probably the worst, the most unenjoyable moment in the car. We could have gone a lot faster, but we had a big enough lead and we just backed off.

Q

Elliot, first event back with Gus since 2015 and it has resulted in a hugely impressive win. Needless to say the relationship worked well this weekend?

EE:

Some reunion! The 2015 season was the last time we worked together, we've both gone off and done a lot since then. It was never the perfect circumstance for me to be back with Gus, but Craig's been here this weekend and he and Antoine have done a fantastic job. It's the perfect way to restart this partnership.

Q:

How were Gus' notes?

EE:

Certainly they were very different to the ones we had in the R2 car in 2015. Gus' notes have come on a lot and, of course, it's a lot faster. We've done a lot of testing and a lot of prep. We got everything as good as we could before SS1 on Thursday night. I think that hard work has paid off.

Q:

How does it feel to have a Monte win under your belt?

EE:

Pretty unbelievable. This is not a place me and Gus have competed together before, to come here and get a win... unbelievable, it'll take some time for this to sink in.

FIA WRC 2 CHAMPIONSHIP

Present:

1st – Yoann Bonato

1st – Benjamin Boulloud

Q:

Yoann, congratulations on the WRC 2 victory. What does it feel like to achieve a win here in Monte?

YB:

Hello everybody. This is a very good result. We had a big fight with Gus until the puncture – but it's a good result for our team and for Citroen. We are very happy with this result.

Q:

But disappointed with the puncture...

YB:

That's life. Sometimes you take some risks, I took a cut and had a puncture immediately, but we decided not to change the tyre and on the finish line this was the right decision.

Q:

Happy with the car?

YB:

For sure very happy with the car and the performance on the rally. It was a very difficult event with the icy conditions, we need to finish first to be in first place.

Q:

How many rounds will we see you on?

YB:

I don't know, we are working for this. I am hoping for Corsica, but nothing is certain.

Q:

What was the toughest part of this event?

BB:

I don't know, I like this one as I'm from around here – I like this kind of conditions! The grip is changing a lot and we have a lot of ice and sometimes it's wet. It's very difficult to read the grip.

Benjamin, how does it feel to win?

BB:

This rally is very, very difficult with the pace notes – so much information. The angle of the corner and so much more information with the ice, or dry. It's not the most difficult today in some stages it was dry, but yesterday when we read the notes with so much on it's difficult.

Q:

Was everything calm in the car?

BB:

Yes, this rally it's never comfortable to drive in these conditions. When you fight with a driver like Gus on the ice on stages like this, it's difficult – the grip is so low. It's very, very hard.