



FEDERATION INTERNATIONALE DE L'AUTOMOBILE

2018 FIA WORLD RALLY CHAMPIONSHIP

RALLYE MONTE-CARLO

Post-event Press Conference
Sunday 28 January

Present:

1st - Sébastien Ogier, M-Sport Ford World Rally Team
1st - Julien Ingrassia M-Sport Ford World Rally Team
2nd - Ott Tänak, Toyota GAZOO Racing WRT
2nd - Martin Järveoja, Toyota GAZOO Racing WRT
3rd - Jari-Matti Latvala, Toyota GAZOO Racing WRT
3rd - Miikka Anttila, Toyota GAZOO Racing WRT
Malcolm Wilson, Team Principal, M-Sport Ford World Rally Team

Q:

Seb, another win on what's been a tough Rallye Monte-Carlo. How's it been for you?

SO:

Once again it was a huge challenge. We always come here knowing it's going to be a difficult week and a tough event to make the good tyre choice. Ott was a difficult contender, but it's also always very good to be here on the podium. Of course, I'm very pleased, this is the best way to start the season. It's good to come back and start the season this way, it's special, but I never struggled so much to be right with the tyres. It was never super-clear with the conditions changing all the time. It's good that we managed to do less mistakes than the others, it was almost impossible to do the perfect weekend and we did mistakes as well. Ours were small mistakes with small consequences and that's how we did this for the fifth time in the row. It feels good.

Q:

How tough was Saturday morning?

SO:

It was definitely one of the hardest stages of my career to drive in this moment. It was hard to explain how tough, I wasn't complaining but it was not enjoyable to drive. It was about surviving. You come to the finish with a big relief and you're super-happy crossing the line, but you have no idea if you are one minute slower or faster. It was a good surprise to see we took the minute compared to Ott. From then on we had the chance to try and manage the gap, but it was not easy. All the day it was tricky with the tyre to control in those conditions. It would have been super-easy to fall out of position. I'm happy to manage to keep the gap yesterday night. I expected today to be easier, but when we wake up we have news of frost and black ice to deal with on Turini. It was tricky until the end.

Q:

What was the plan for the Power Stage?

SO:

I couldn't be completely relaxed and not really go for it. I knew with Thierry and Ott that we were fighting for two points. Thierry, Andreas and Craig had the four soft tyres for the Power Stage. I had worn super softs and not the right things to be fast, so I tried to drive clean. The road was clean at the beginning, but then we had some dirty corners at the finish and I couldn't go for it. Every point is important at the moment, so I'm happy with this single point.

Q:

What did you think of Malcolm Wilson's performance as Team Principal, was it good?

SO:

I had better say yes, I guess! It's always difficult to start the season in Monte-Carlo on the hardest event in terms of organisation, logistics, meteo and co-ordination – all of that is tricky. We had some changes in the team, some new engineers, a new meteo forecaster who is unfortunately from Estonia – that's why we got it wrong sometimes! No, I mean when we know how hard it is, we have to congratulate all of them, they have all tried as hard as they can.

Q:

How difficult was your job this week?

Jl:

Each time we're here on the podium – and my rivals say the same – we're here without any breath for one full week. Congratulations to all the co-drivers on doing a very good job, all the guys do the same as me. It's a very difficult position to get the notes and read new notes which are completely different from what you have on the recce. You memorise some of these notes and then they are completely different, I realise sometimes I was just reading and not analysing what I was saying. There were a lot of changes of rhythm, so it's really good when the driver is still trusting you in the car.

Q:

It's a great start to the season...

Jl:

Yes. We know the championship will be hard and Monte-Carlo is special, this is the city of Seb and my region and it reminds me of one year ago. We have to thank those guys, it's one year on and now we have to start again for everything – it's a big motivation.

Q:

This is the first event with a new team and you're on the podium – you must be delighted?

OT:

Yes. I am very relieved as well. It was a bit of an unknown before the rally, I had no idea where we would be. We'd done quite a bit of testing, but testing doesn't show anything. The rally started quite OK, we lost a bit of time, but then it was improving step-by-step and we were enjoying more and more. When the conditions got tricky I had a good feeling in the car and felt big support from the team, they gave their maximum. It was quite an enjoyable weekend, the conditions were very, very hard, but it's nice to feel the support and the will to fight.

Q:

The gap grew in the snow, did you back off?

OT:

Unfortunately we had a bit of an issue with the dampers, something broke; that's how it is sometimes. We survived the first loop. After this we were back on the pace and then I'm quite happy. We were playing in Sébastien's backyard here and we were competitive. Let's see what the future brings, but in Sweden it's more like our backyard...

Q:

How was your route note crew?

OT:

They called me before the Power Stage and he said he wants to talk about this responsibility after the rally, and I can understand that. It was a tough weekend, I'm sure I would not be doing this job myself. We have to say they do a difficult job to predict the weather, when it's raining and snowing. And, knowing what kind of drivers we are, if there's a bit missing we are still kicking them for this. They did a great job. I kind of love them, even if I'm giving them a hard time some times.

Q:

Martin, 12 months ago you were on the podium on your first event. What have you learned in the last year?

MJ:

Last year I didn't know what to expect, but this year I knew it's going to be a tough one. Ott mentioned he was enjoying this rally sometimes and I was also enjoying sometimes. Sometimes I was a passenger and sometimes Ott was also a passenger in the car and then we both didn't enjoy it so much!

Q:

What's the goal for this year? The Championship?

MJ:

Championship for sure.

SO:

It's nice to have some dreams.

MJ:

Let's see.

Q:

Jari-Matti, you talked about getting the monkey off your back with this result, what did you mean?

J-ML:

The reason is that last time I was on the podium with Miikka was over six months ago in Sardinia. In Australia I was aiming for the podium and you always want a good finish and we finished the season with a S.H.I.T. feeling and then we have to wait two months for the next rally. It's not a nice feeling. Doing a mistake in the fight, that we can accept, but when you are not in the fight then you can't accept the mistake.

Q:

Is that now out of your mind?

J-ML:

Yes, now. It was a long time ago. At the end of the Power Stage I didn't even remember how you have to go off to the podium!

Q:

Has your new team-mate Ott fired you up this year?

J-ML:

It's been a boost for all the team when Ott and Martin joined. They have brought some very good knowledge from M-Sport. I'm very happy with that and we've been able to improve our car, it's a really good feeling in the car. Let's see what we can achieve.

Q:

You won Sweden, what's the plan this time?

J-ML:

The men next to me want to win, I'm 100 per cent sure about that – in Sweden my mind is only about driving fast. Here my mind was on the clean run and a good start to the season. But Sweden I really love.

Q:

Miikka, how does it feel for you?

MA:

It's good to be back. When we were on the podium I said the Michelin cap has a new design since last summer, but we don't really know because we didn't see it since last summer. It's been good. Like Martin and Julien already explained, it's hard work and one thing that doesn't help is the mobile network and road timing – it would be nice if this could be improved.

Q:

Yesterday morning, what was it like on the snow?

MA:

Before Christmas we had a really good test on full snow and that helped a lot. Before the stage Esapekka and Jari-Matti were nervous, so I said: "Hey, come on we're from Scandinavia! We're supposed to be comfortable here!"

Q:

Malcolm how special is this win?

MW:

You can't imagine... it's not going to beat last year for sure, but to come here and win the most difficult Monte I've been involved in is special. Normally I make decisions inside my head on what tyres I would use and on a couple of occasions I couldn't have made those decisions. Seb spoke to his gravel crew and I said, what did he say, Seb said: "He didn't know either!" That tells you how difficult it was.

Q:

A great start from the team, Elfyn showed consistent pace...

MW:

Yeah, it's been a really strong performance. Unfortunately on Thursday night Elfyn clipped a rock and got a puncture, but the good times followed – including a couple of quickest times. It's a shame to lose out today, he found Turini tough and didn't have the confidence and if you don't have the confidence then you pay the price. He's done a very solid job.

Q:

Do you think the Championships will be tougher this year?

MW:

I don't think, I know. At the moment the competition with the cars and drivers, it's so evenly matched, it's going to be an unbelievable challenge.

FIA WRC 2 CHAMPIONSHIP

Present:

1st - Jan Kopecky

1st - Pavel Dresler

Q:

Jan, congratulations. How was it from your side?

JK:

We tried many times to win this and now finally we did. It was tricky conditions especially in Sisteron. This was the first time for me, even though we have done Monte-Carlo several times before. We started slower, the others gave me some pressure but it was a shame when they left – the fight was good. We had to stay concentrated.

Q:

Was Sisteron the most difficult stage?

JK:

On Saturday morning the snow came overnight and it was quite heavy. It was not freezing, but it was slush, it was impossible to do anything and in one moment we were very lucky – we almost hit a tree, but luckily we didn't.

Q:

It's a legendary rally, how much does this win mean?

JK:

You see what happened this weekend, easily this is the most difficult rally in the world.

Q:

What about your schedule, when will we see you again?

JK:

Hopefully this will open us some more chances – the next event could be Corsica possibly, we will see.

Q:

Pavel how was it for you?

PD:

Very nice, it was like a four-season race, we had spring, summer, winter and fall. It was nice, but hard to take good tyres and the rhythm was changing a lot. In the stage we have the winter then the rain. It was hard.

Q:

It's a complex event for a co-driver, it went well for you?

PD:

I am happy. We made much work before with the gravel crew and during the week, it was incredible.

Q:

Did you get good information from the route note crew?

PD:

They did a very good job, yes. It's easier for us, they are up so early in the morning.

FIA WRC 3 CHAMPIONSHIP

Present:

1st - Enrico Brazzoli

1st - Luca Beltrame

Q:

Enrico, this is a special result for you. Proud?

EB:

For me it's very emotional, this is the first time in Monte-Carlo and it is a very difficult rally: very slippery and various conditions with rain, snow and ice, very, very difficult. I am very happy to win this year.

Q:

This is the first time with your new co-driver too.

EB:

Yes, congratulations for him – this is very big for him.

Q:

Any moments?

EB:

On Sisteron we chose not the right tyres and it was very difficult. I lose four minutes there, it was very difficult, but now we are here I'm very happy.

Q:

What's your season like?

EB:

Next rally is Sweden and perhaps Argentina, but it's very difficult – I hope to do the year.

Q:

Luca, what a first outing for you...

LB:

Monte-Carlo is very strong, it's the second time I did this one – I did one as a gravel crew.

Q:

You know how hard they work then?

LB:

Our ice-note crew work very well, they give good information and good time for the tyre choice.

Q:

How stressful is this event?

LB:

The driver only works in the stage, but the co-driver works at all the time!

Q:

But you enjoyed it?

LB:

Yes, a lot. Really a lot.