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## **TÄNAK IN PODIUM POSITION** AS M-SPORT FIGHT FOR SWEDISH SUCCESS

M-Sport World Rally Team's Ott Tänak and Martin Järveoja are in podium position after the first day of competition at Rally Sweden. Piloting their EcoBoost-powered Ford Fiesta WRC through the snow-covered stages of both Sweden and Norway, the Estonians overcame all challenges with a perfect display of their now trademark determination.

In the sister Fiesta WRC, Sébastien Ogier and Julien Ingrassia currently hold fifth place overall – just six seconds adrift of the podium despite the challenges of running as the first car on the road. Having delivered a solid performance over the opening speed tests, the Frenchmen will be eager for further gains when the action resumes tomorrow.

**Team Principal, Malcolm Wilson OBE, said:**

*"This rally is notorious for close-fought competition and it seems as though this year will be no different. We have all three of our cars in the top-ten, and I'm sure that there will be some exciting battles over the next two days.*

*"We've seen a really strong afternoon from Ott. We had some small technical issues this morning which cost him some time, so to be in podium position at the end of the day was a really strong performance.*

*"It was a difficult day for Sébastien running as the first car on the road but he never gives up the fight, and I'm sure he'll be putting some pressure on the guys at the front tomorrow."*

## **TÄNAK AND JÄRVEOJA** THIRD OVERALL AFTER EIGHT STAGES

Determined to make their mark on the snow-covered stages of Rally Sweden, Ott Tänak and Martin Järveoja have been in the running for the podium positions throughout day. Known for its closely fought battles, the Swedish fixture is living up to its name and the Estonians are in the mix for a top result.

Running as high as second overall after the first pass of Rödjen (SS2), Tänak was just three seconds shy of the lead before losing confidence through the following speed test and developing an intermittent gear-selection issue.



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The technicians put in a master service – changing the gearbox within the 30 minute service – and Tänak was back on the pace; despite a disadvantageous road position.

In fifth position before the final stage of the day, the Estonian showed his customary bravery one again with a huge push through Torsby 1 (SS8) – taking the stage win, and with it, third place in the overall standings.

#### Stage performances:

SS1: 4th (+0.8)  
SS2: 3rd (+2.8)  
SS3: 9th (+8.7)  
SS4: 4th (+12.9)  
SS5: 3rd (+7.4)  
SS6: 5th (+5.1)  
SS7: 6th (+21.8)  
**SS8: 1st**

#### Ott Tänak (3rd) said:

*“It’s been a really difficult day. This was my first experience of being one of the guys opening the road and I never knew how hard the job was for Seb – now I can say that it is very difficult! Even with those challenges, I think we managed the day really well and I think we can be happy with our performance.”*

*“The gaps were really close before the last stage and I pushed really hard to get the position for tomorrow. The further back you are the better the conditions will be and I gave it everything. It was a big effort, but there will be some really fast stages tomorrow so the push will have to continue.”*

## OGIER AND INGRASSIA

### FIFTH OVERALL AFTER EIGHT STAGES

Disadvantaged as the first car on the road, Sébastien Ogier and Julien Ingrassia had to contend with the worst of the conditions throughout the opening day of Rally Sweden.

As the championship leaders, the pairing have been charged with the arduous task of forging a clean line through the fresh snow – to the benefit of their rivals behind.

Having to contend with a lack of traction their times reflected the difficult task, but the Frenchmen refused to give up the fight and fought hard to remain in the battle for a strong result.

Delivering a clean and confident drive behind the wheel of their Ford Fiesta WRC, Ogier and Ingrassia faced their challenges head on and close the opening day in fifth place overall – just six seconds adrift of the podium.

#### Stage performances:

SS1: 5th (+0.9)  
SS2: 10th (+10.7)  
SS3: 4th (+3.1)  
SS4: 3rd (+9.6)  
SS5: 6th (+12.5)  
SS6: 6th (+6.2)  
SS7: 3rd (+16.4)  
SS8: 4th (+6.1)

**Sébastien Ogier (5th) said:**

*"We really tried everything we could, but it's clear that the conditions have not been on our side today. Following the historic cars this afternoon was especially difficult as the first car on the road and there really wasn't much we could do."*

*"I've been pleased with our drive and I think we did a good job with the challenges we had. Tomorrow we will have better conditions so we're looking forward to a more enjoyable day. We weren't able to show our true performance today, and tomorrow I think we'll have a better indication of where we are."*

## **ELSEWHERE IN THE M-SPORT TEAM**

Elsewhere in the M-Sport team, Teemu Suninen and Éric Camilli hold second and fourth places respectively in the WRC 2 category.

Despite a cautious start as he got to grips with the Ford Fiesta R5, Suninen soon set a string of competitive times which saw him climb an impressive 20 places on the overall leader board.

Finding his feet – at an event he has only contested once before – the Finn secured the fastest time through the second pass of Hof-Finnskog (SS7) which was new to all competitors this year.

For Camilli, the snow-covered stages of Rally Sweden are far from familiar. Despite his inexperience on the white stuff, the Frenchman delivered a clean run and is currently out-performing a number of his vastly more experienced rivals with a number of top-three stage performances.

Currently holding a fine fourth place overall, Camilli will be hoping for more of the same tomorrow.

**Teemu Suninen (2nd WRC2) said:**

*"It has been a good day for us. I was driving a bit too carefully this morning and lost some time but in the afternoon we were a lot better. I felt a lot more comfortable and was able to set a fastest time so I can be happy with that."*

*"All the fast stages have been good for me so far. I like those stages and we have more of that tomorrow. I just need to keep focused with no mistakes and continue to improve."*

**Éric Camilli (4th WRC2) said:**

*"We lost some time this morning – just trying to adapt to this unfamiliar surface – but this afternoon was good and I think we can be happy with that."*

*"Fourth place is pretty much where we expected to be at this rally, but there is a long way to go and anything is possible. We'll certainly try our best to keep the pressure on and, who knows, maybe even a podium in Sweden!"*

*"Tomorrow's stages should suit us a little bit better, so let's see what happens."*

## **ELSEWHERE IN THE SERVICE PARK**

Elsewhere in the service park, Elfyn Evans suffered a puncture after running his DMACK-clad Ford Fiesta WRC wide into a snow bank on the first pass of Svullrya (SS4).

The Welshman had been matching his rivals before the incident – costing him almost two



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minutes to the leading pack and relegated him outside of the top-ten. Fighting back, Evans and co-driver Daniel Barritt now hold ninth place overall.

In the RC4 class, Daniel Röjssel is dominating the event behind the wheel of his one-litre Ecoboost-powered Ford Fiesta R2. Having won seven of the eight stages contested thus far, the young Swede holds a commanding three minute lead over fellow Fiesta R2 competitor, Oscar Solberg.

## OVERALL CLASSIFICATION

1. Thierry Neuville / Nicolas Gilsoul (Hyundai i20 Coupe WRC) 1:16:24.7
2. Jari-Matti Latvala / Miikka Anttila (Toyota Yaris WRC) +28.1
- 3. Ott Tänak / Martin Järveoja (Ford Fiesta WRC) +49.7**
4. Kris Meeke / Paul Nagle (Citroen C3 WRC) +51.8
- 5. Sébastien Ogier / Julien Ingrassia (Ford Fiesta WRC) +55.7**
6. Hayden Paddon / John Kennard (Hyundai i20 Coupe WRC) +1:17.8
7. Dani Sordo / Marc Marti (Hyundai i20 Coupe WRC) +1:40.3
8. Craig Breen / Scott Martin (Citroen C3 WRC) +1:54.3
- 9. Elfyn Evans / Daniel Barritt (Ford Fiesta WRC) +3:01.5**
10. Stephane Lefebvre / Gabin Moreau (Citroen DS3 WRC) +3:23.6

- ENDS -

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