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WORLD RALLY TEAM



PULSAR



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TÄNAK ON A MISSION FIGHTING FOR RALLY SWEDEN VICTORY

M-Sport World Rally Team's Ott Tänak and Martin Järveoja will be just 3.8 seconds adrift of a maiden FIA World Rally Championship victory when the final day of Rally Sweden commences tomorrow.

The Estonians have been on a charge behind the wheel of their EcoBoost-powered Ford Fiesta WRC today. Coupling impressive speed with a controlled drive, the pairing secured three stage victories and took 17.8 seconds out of new rally-leader Jari-Matti Latvala – setting up an exciting final day showdown.

There remains all to play for and fans can expect a thoroughly exciting 58.81 kilometres to close proceeding at the Swedish fixture.

In the sister M-Sport Fiesta WRC, Sébastien Ogier and Julien Ingrassia have used their experience to full effect.

Despite being hampered by a less than perfect road position, the Frenchmen have bided their time to secure third place overall – and the prospect of a second successive double podium for the M-Sport team.

Team Principal, Malcolm Wilson OBE, said:

"What a battle we are in store for tomorrow. The way the rally was going with Sébastien and Ott opening the road on Friday, I can tell you that this is not the position we thought we would find ourselves in on the final day.

"Now we have everything to fight for with Ott just 3.8 seconds behind the lead and we're certainly hoping to be in a position to challenge for the win. He's delivered a superb drive today, and if he can carry on like this then I'm sure he'll take the fight to Jari-Matti [Latvala].

"Then we have Sébastien not far behind in third. He's produced another very intelligent drive in difficult circumstances and is there to take advantage of any last minute drama.

"With three cars in the top six, we've proven again how strong a package we have in the Ford Fiesta WRC. It's a credit to all the team who have worked extremely hard in the lead-up to this season.

"Looking ahead to tomorrow, anything can happen. But one thing is for sure. We're in for an incredibly exciting final showdown!"

TÄNAK AND JÄRVEOJA

SECOND OVERALL AFTER FIFTEEN STAGES

Claiming three stage victories, Ott Tänak and Martin Järveoja have been the men to beat today – supported all the way by their loyal band of followers who made the journey to cheer on their home-grown heroes.

No longer hampered by an early road position, the Estonians were able to show their true potential and were untouchable through the morning loop. Thoroughly enjoying the high-speed stages, the pairing took advantage of the more consistent grip levels and set three consecutive fastest times.

Continuing his strong performance into the afternoon loop, Tänak was never out of the top three on individual stage times and slashed a 21.6 second deficit to just 3.8 seconds in the battle for second position.

In the final stage of the day however, the battle for second became a battle for victory when Thierry Neuville fell by the wayside – crashing out of the lead on the Karlstad Super Special (SS15)

With Tänak having combined his impressive speed with a controlled drive, he need only continue in the same vein tomorrow – in hot pursuit of an elusive first victory at rallying's highest level.

Stage performances:

SS9: 1st
SS10: 1st
SS11: 1st
SS12: *Cancelled*
SS13: 2nd (+1.1)
SS14: 3rd (+5.7)
SS15: 3rd (+0.4)

Ott Tänak (2nd) said:

"It's been a really enjoyable day. We had some more consistent grip levels and were able to really push. The morning loop was really good for us and I think we can be happy with the job we have done."

"We've had a clean run and a really good feeling with the car. We lost a little bit of time passing Kris [Meeke] through the second pass of Vargåsen (SS14), but apart from that everything has been working really well and it's been a really clean drive."

"The gaps are really small both ahead and behind, but of course the situation has changed a little bit now and it's the battle for the victory. Honestly, that hasn't changed my approach. Whether it was the battle for second or the battle for the win, we have to keep pushing and we will just go out there and do our best."

"Anything is possible and, like everyone else, I'm actually quite excited to see what will happen."

OGIER AND INGRASSIA

THIRD OVERALL AFTER FIFTEEN STAGES

No longer opening the road, Sébastien Ogier and Julien Ingrassia were able to enjoy the snow-covered stages of Rally Sweden today and climbed into the podium positions.

Still at a disadvantage when compared to their closest rivals, the Frenchmen delivered a fine performance and posted a string of top-three stage times.

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Just 16.6 seconds adrift of the lead, Ogier's experience could yet prove vital and the Frenchman's intelligent approach means that he can never be discounted.

With three stages left to contest, there remains all to play for and the four-time World Champion is on course to secure another strong result on what is only his second competitive outing with the Fiesta.

Stage performances:

SS9: 2nd (+2.6)
SS10: 3rd (+0.9)
SS11: 5th (+4.7)
SS12: *Cancelled*
SS13: 4th (+2.2)
SS14: 2nd (+3.3)
SS15: 2nd (+0.3)

Sébastien Ogier (3rd) said:

"I think we can be quite happy with our day. I would have liked to have found a bit more speed but unfortunately that just wasn't possible. I really tried to push, but every time we were struggling with the grip and hitting the snow banks.

"It was much better than yesterday, but we know that it is a big advantage to start at the back of the field at this rally. We didn't have the optimum road position, but there is still a fight going on.

"It's going to be an exciting day tomorrow and we all want to achieve the best result. I'm sure we'll all be flat-out and we'll just have to wait and see what happens."

ELSEWHERE

IN THE M-SPORT TEAM

Elsewhere in the M-Sport team, Teemu Suninen maintained his second position in the WRC 2 category. Contesting the Swedish fixture for only the second time, the young Finn is bettered only by Värmland local Pontus Tidemand and currently holds tenth place in the overall standings.

Familiarising themselves with the Ecoboost-powered Ford Fiesta R5, Suninen and co-driver Mikko Markkula have had the better of their more seasoned rivals and are on course for a podium result with just three stages left to contest.

In the sister Fiesta R5, Éric Camilli and Benjamin Veillas hold fourth position on what is only the second snow rally of their careers.

Out performing a number of their more experienced rivals, the Frenchmen have delivered a fine performance – getting to grips with the snow-covered stages whilst posting a string of competitive times.

Teemu Suninen (2nd WRC2) said:

"I think it's been a good day for us. We lost quite a lot of time this morning [on SS9] when the windscreen steamed over, but since then we've had good pace and were able to challenge the local guys.

"Tomorrow we just need to keep going flat-out. We want that second place, and I know that Veiby wants it too, so we're going to have to go for it and give it our all."

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Éric Camilli (4th WRC2) said:

"I think we've had another really good day. We were pushing and I've been really happy with my performance – matching the locals who have so much experience here. Quite a few times we were on course for a really, really good stage time but we lost some seconds in the last split which cost us some stage wins.

"It's really encouraging. We needed to be focused to learn quickly as there is only one snow rally of the year and I have so little experience on this surface. I think we have done that, and we can be very happy with our performance so far."

ELSEWHERE

IN THE SERVICE PARK

Elsewhere in the service park, the roles were reversed for Elfyn Evans and Daniel Barritt as they were tasked with the arduous job of leading the field as one of the opening cars on the road.

Having lost two minutes to a puncture yesterday morning, the Welshman is running as the third car on the road and has had to contend with the slippery conditions which were made all the more challenging with a fresh flurry of snow overnight.

Despite the difficult task, Evans delivered a clean performance behind the wheel of his DMACK-clad Ford Fiesta WRC, and climbed to sixth place in the overall standings.

In the RC4 class, Sweden's Daniel Röjsel continues to hold a commanding lead behind the wheel of his one-litre EcoBoost Ford Fiesta R2. Claiming a further two stage victories, the youngster holds an impressive seven minute advantage in class and is the leading two-wheel-drive competitor.

OVERALL

CLASSIFICATION

1. Jari-Matti Latvala / Miikka Anttila (Toyota Yaris WRC) 2:04:59.3
2. **Ott Tänak / Martin Järveoja (Ford Fiesta WRC) +3.8**
3. **Sébastien Ogier / Julien Ingrassia (Ford Fiesta WRC) +16.6**
4. Dani Sordo / Marc Marti (Hyundai 120 Coupe WRC) +1:39.5
5. Craig Breen / Scott Martin (Citroen C3 WRC) +2:04.5
6. **Elfyn Evans / Daniel Barritt (Ford Fiesta WRC) +3:44.7**
7. Hayden Paddon / John Kennard (Hyundai i20 Coupe WRC) +5:00.2
8. Stephane Lefebvre / Gabin Moreau (Citroen DS3 WRC) +5:47.0
9. Pontus Tidemand / Jonas Andersson (Skoda Fabia R5) +6:36.7
10. **Teemu Suninen / Mikko Markkula (Ford Fiesta R5) +7:52.9**

- ENDS -

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