



FEDERATION INTERNATIONALE DE L'AUTOMOBILE

2017 FIA WORLD RALLY CHAMPIONSHIP

RALLY SWEDEN

Post event Press Conference
12 February 2017

Present:

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

Q:

Second rally in a brand new car with a brand new team, congratulations Jari-Matti! You said in Monte-Carlo it could take six months to hit the podium and now you've taken your first win of the season. How are you feeling?

J-ML:

It's an absolutely amazing feeling. This victory feels like when I got my first victory back in 2008 in this rally. That year the victory came as a great surprise, it also came today as a surprise because after yesterday's performance I was quite sure Ott Tänak was going to win this rally. But the stages today were suiting my driving style and the car and I could drive on a different level.

Q:

Were you surprised when you got to the finish of the first stage today and saw the difference in time between you and Ott [Tänak]?

J-ML:

We had a very good feeling on the stage and it was going nicely but we were still surprised that we managed to be quicker.

Q:

You built up a 20 second lead going into the final stage. We all know there are extra points in the Power Stage, but extra points mean extra risk. And you took it, what was your thought process?

J-ML:

I spoke to Tommi [Mäkinen] before the stage and he said to just go out there and continue how I had been going. On the stage I thought that maybe I should slow down but the feeling was good so I decided to go with the feeling and just carry on.

Q:

It's seems to be a new and reinvigorated Jari-Matti this year. Am I right?

J-ML:

I dropped my performance second half of last season and I can honestly say I lost some confidence. So when I got a chance to drive the Toyota and also start something from

scratch it was a big motivation boost. There is a great spirit in the team and that has been lifting me back to the level where I used to be.

Q:

Did you expect to find yourself in this position in the championship so early on?

J-ML:

No. I said for Monte-Carlo, top six, and for Sweden, top five. But now it will become more difficult when we go to gravel. If we want to keep fighting we will have to do even more work. But I like it and we have a good feeling and motivation in the team.

Q:

When you started this morning, did you say to just go for it Miikka?

MA:

The target was to have a clean run and we knew that the stage was a proper winter stage with proper conditions so we expected it to be to our benefit. So we felt good but we did not expect that we would win it so that was a bit of a surprise.

Q:

Were you concerned with the Power Stage and taking risks there for maximum points?

MA:

Not really. I think what happened today was what should have happened yesterday, we just followed the line and that brought the fastest time. I just cannot stop praising the work the team has done with the car, it's incredible.

Q:

Ott, what was going through your mind when you got to the finish of the first stage this morning?

OT:

I felt from the beginning of the stage that it wasn't going to be easy. We made some small mistakes and you feel immediately when it's not going perfect. Jari [Latvala] was really flying and we had no chance to match him. But I'm still happy for him; it's been good company this weekend!

Q:

Your pace has been increasing here in Sweden from your already good pace in Monte-Carlo. Are you happy with your performance?

OT:

I'm very happy with the start of the season. I feel quite comfortable in the car, it's a really good car. There's still some work to do but we all know what we need to do so we just have to keep pushing.

Q:

What areas is it you need to work on?

OT:

We need to get faster and I need to find a better match with the car. So far I'm really happy and we've taken a big step from last year. I'm happy I've been with the car from the beginning so I know the car quite well.

Q:

Was it a tough weekend from the co-driving seat Martin?

MJ:

Compared to Monte-Carlo it was a little easier, so it was quite nice this weekend.

Q:

Were you feeling the pressure this morning?

MJ:

There was some pressure but after the first stage we understood that it was going to be hard to match Jari-Matti, so... second place is not so bad I think.

Q:

But it's been a great weekend for the team?

MJ:

Yes. And if these three teams keep rotating for the podium I'm looking forward to the rest of the season!

Q:

Seb, could you tell us what happened on the opening stage this morning?

SO:

I did one of the most stupid mistakes of my career. In the first corner, 50 metres in, I caught a snow bank and spun and then I stalled the engine and I knew my chances were over. I didn't even get the chance to try. In the end I can say that my weekend was a difficult one but what I got from it is really good because 19 points I'm very happy with. It's a good step in the championship. The bigger picture of the weekend was positive for us.

Q:

The championship is moving to gravel next. Have you done any testing on gravel?

SO:

No, not yet. I knew from the start of the season that I was going to start a bit behind the others. I still struggle a bit with the car and struggle to find the perfect settings. But to see the results we get even when not having the best preparation is good. We have a really good base so let's see what Mexico brings and we hope to secure some points there.

Q:

The Power Stage, Jari-Matti was really fast in there. Were you surprised?

SO:

Actually I was really happy to see him go fast in there. Now he gets to open the road for me in Mexico! My target in there was to secure my points and I'm happy with that. Being four points behind in this stage of the championship is not that much.

Q:

Seb has described the weekend as difficult, but you do walk away with good points to the championship so that is a positive note Julien?

JL:

Yeah, we had some good days as well so we can't complain. We just tried the Fiesta in December and here in Sweden we had two days to prepare. When the speed is so high we feel that we're in a good pace of course so it will be exciting.

Q:

Across the board we see that the level is raised by everyone and it should make a really exciting championship. Are you ready for that?

JL:

Don't worry, we are!

SO:

By the way, I would like to congratulate Tommi and the whole Toyota team for their debut, it's really great for Jari-Matti and Miikka as well. We had a great time as team mates and I'm happy to see Jari smiling again like he used to do some time ago.

Q:

Congratulations Tommi! The first win for the brand new Toyota GAZOO Racing team on only the second rally of the season; what a special moment!

TM:

Yeah of course, it's a very very special moment for all of us. I need to thank our team. Incredible support from everybody, for all the drivers. It's a question of how we were able to build up our team so quickly and be so strong. Without Jari-Matti we couldn't have done that this weekend, I want to very clearly say that; he was the strongest man in the world during this weekend. Thanks to all of you drivers, you made it such a spectacular rally for everyone all over the world. The fighting and the way you keep it very interesting. I would like to say that we have different brands on the podium. We could have seen one more, but it was unfortunate with Thierry's mistake yesterday, but this is what can happen in motor sport. I would say people at the end of last year were thinking that we couldn't be where we are now, but we knew our potential. Of course we had no knowledge of the other step, that made it a little bit difficult to go forward. Now it's far more easy when we know where we are at the moment. After Monte-Carlo we couldn't really analyse the overall package because of such extreme conditions. It's more of a drivers rally. Here we could immediately see the great points for us and we have also a few things in our pocket to make us stronger in Mexico.

Q:

What kind of things have you got in your pocket?

TM:

We know some areas that we can do better with our car.

Q:

What areas?

TM:

Everybody knows this was our first time and we still have improvements to do on the car. It's always a question of a complete package. The powerline follows the chassis and everything, all together, the confidence it can build for drivers. There are many small details, of course not that big, but we know that we still have quite a lot to do.

Q:

At the launch in December, we saw a video of Mr Toyoda saying that he loves to win. Have you spoken to him since you won?

TM:

I got some messages from Japan and he was looking really happy.

FIA WRC 2 CHAMPIONSHIP

Present:

1st – Pontus Tidemand, Škoda Motorsport

1st – Jonas Andersson, Škoda Motorsport

Q:

Congratulations Pontus. What a weekend it's been for you. You won with a high margin and you won at home. How are you feeling?

PT:

I'm feeling very good. It's been almost a perfect weekend, we've had good preparations and the team has been fantastic. Jonas [Andersson, co-driver] has been great. It has felt so easy even though we know it's not easy. We've been able to focus and now we are here as winners. One of my most enjoyable rallies.

Q:

Would you say it's been your best one?

PT:

Yes, absolutely.

Q:

You made it look really easy. Did you have any problems at all this weekend?

PT:

No [and laughs]

Q:

Is he telling the truth, Jonas? Were there any moments?

JA:

No, no drama at all, it's been a very clean weekend. We focused on the right things.

Q:

Home win for you as well. Is it special?

JA:

Absolutely. The conditions on the stages have been fantastic and to finish today in the sunshine here in Torsby with all the people has been great fun.

Q:

How does this affect your confidence in the championship now Pontus, is it a good boost?

PT:

Yes. It's a perfect start to the season and it has given us and the team a boost.

Q:

Where do we see you next?

PT:

I'm hoping Mexico but it's not 100% yet.

Q:

If it happens, how do you feel about the possibility to compete on gravel in Mexico?

PT:

For me it would be the first time there and a very good experience. A new country and a new challenge.