

# Handbrakes and Hairpins

Issue 01

A FREE weekly Rally newsletter by Evan Rothman

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Chris de Wit in action. PHOTO: Evan Rothman

## *Thrilling Driving Action In Volkswagen Rally*

**Serge Damseaux and Robert Paisley powered their S2000 Castrol Toyota RunX RSi to a breathtaking win on round five of the Sasol SA Rally Championship to extend their lead in the title chase to 10 points with three rounds remaining. This victory takes Serge's career tally to 73 and was his 11th win on the Eastern Cape event.**

The Castrol Toyota pair shot out of the starting blocks, taking the fastest time in the first two stages, later adding two more stage wins to end Friday's action in a dead heat with close championship rival, Enzo Kuun/Guy Hodgson in their BP Volkswagen Polo.

Saturday dawned grey and cold but the ten times SA driver's champion was in top form, scorching to a five second win on the opening stage of the day to break the deadlock at the head of the timesheets.

Over the remaining stages in the Longmore Forest, Serge and Robert extended their lead to bring the winner's trophy back to Toyota Motorsport's head office with a comfortable

25-second cushion. The BP Volkswagen Polo team was unable to challenge thrown to them by Damseaux/Paisley, but with the next rally in Bloemfontein this weekend, the chase for the championship title hots up!

Johnny Gemmell and Zimbabwean co-driver Peter Marsh brought the second S2000 Castrol Toyota RunX RSi home in 5th place overall after a frustrating run on Friday. Gemmell ended the rally off just five seconds from 4th placed Hergen Fekken/Pierre Arries (VW Polo).

Final Results:

- 1) S. Damseaux/R. Paisley S2000 Castrol Toyota RunX
- 2) J. Habig/D. Judd S2000 BP Ultimate Volkswagen Polo
- 3) E. Kuun/G. Hodgson S2000 BP Ultimate Volkswagen Polo
- 4) H. Fekken/P. Arries S2000 BP Ultimate Volkswagen Polo
- 5) J. Gemmell/P. Marsh S2000 Castrol Toyota RunX
- 6) F. Rueda/G. Snyman N4 Total Mitsubishi Lancer Evo 9
- 7) V. du Plessis/D. Lewkowicz N4 Pirtek Subaru Impreza
- 8) P. Pfeiffer/C. Harding N4 Mitsubishi Lancer Evo 6
- 9) N. Ryan/S. van Heerden N4 Bosal Subaru Impreza N12B
- 10) M. Cronje/C. Birkin A7 Castrol Toyota RunX RSi.

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# WRC Rally Finland Review



PHOTO: [www.quickpic.co.za](http://www.quickpic.co.za)

## Gronholm crowned King of Finland

The Flying Finn, Marcus Gronholm, has notched up his seventh home rally win since the 2000 WRC season. Hot on his heels was his BP-Ford team-mate Mikko Hirvonen, another fast Finn, writes **Evan Rothman**.

WRC Rally Finland is regarded as one of the most spectacular and fastest events on the calendar. Fast sweeps, high jumps, low grip and tree-lined roads distinguish this rally from all others around the world. To me, this rally is one not to miss. The drivers fight machine and nature and man in a gladiatorial-style battle.

This rally marked the debut of the 2007 WRC Ford Focus, which is an evolution of last year's model that brought the team the WRC Manufacturer's Championship. The new car is lighter, has a revised aerodynamic package, a stiffer chassis and offers more safety measures for the driver and co-driver.

Hirvonen pushed Gronholm hard throughout the four days of rallying, resulting in identical stage times on several occasions. Hirvonen had to settle for second place overall, albeit 24 seconds adrift from Gronholm.

The Frenchman Sebastien Loeb (Citroen) could not find the speed needed to catch the Flying Finn. As evidence of his struggle to close the gap on Gronholm, Loeb uncharacteristically spun the car once in a hairpin.

Gronholm has now extended his lead over Sebastien Loeb by 13 points for the driver's title. Third in the Driver's Championship is Hirvonen, five points off the Frenchman, Loeb.

Chris Atkinson (Subaru) scored a much needed five points by finishing in fourth place. Atkinson showed a lot of speed and

consistency here, exactly what a team wants in their younger driver. His team-mate, Petter Solberg, was forced to once again retire from an event with hydraulic failure.

Henning Solberg rounded out the top five for Stobart Motorsport. The points earned moves Henning past his brother into fifth for the drivers' title. Stobart continues to be the most successful privateer team and keeps in touch with Subaru for manufactures' points.

Taking up the final three point-paying positions included Xavier Pons in sixth, Urmo Aava taking seventh and Mads Ostbrg with the last point for eighth place.

Next up is the OMV ADAC Rallye Deutschland. The roads in Germany range from narrow asphalt through wine vineyards to broken up concrete paths used by treaded tanks at a military base. It will be interesting to see if Ford's speed can be any leverage against Loeb's tarmac prowess.

Drivers' Championship after WRC Finland:

- |                   |                    |
|-------------------|--------------------|
| 1) M. Gronholm 75 | 2) S. Loeb 62      |
| 3) M. Hirvonen 57 | 4) D. Sordo 28     |
| 5) H. Solberg 28  | 6) P. Solberg 26   |
| 7) C. Atkinson 20 | 8) J-M. Latvala 12 |
| 9) D. Carlsson 9  | 10) M. Stohl 9     |

Manufacturers' Championship after WRC Finland:

- 1) BP-Ford World Rally Team 132
- 2) Citroen Total World Rally Team 92
- 3) Subaru World Rally Team 48
- 4) Stobart VK M-Sport Ford Rally Team 45
- 5) OMV Kronos Citroen World Rally Team 27
- 6) Munchi's Ford World Rally Team

# WRC Team Biography



PHOTO: [www.quickpic.co.za](http://www.quickpic.co.za)

## ***SPOTLIGHT: BP-Ford World Rally Team***

The WRC is Ford of Europe's primary motorsport activity. Through the BP-Ford World Rally Team, Ford enters two Focus RS World Rally Cars on all 16 rounds of the series, driven by double world champions Marcus Grönholm and Timo Rautainen and fellow Finns Mikko Hirvonen and Jarmo Lehtinen. The programme is operated on Ford's behalf by long-term partner M-Sport, the home of the Blue Oval's international rally projects. Ford supports customers throughout various other motorsport activities. These include the FIA Junior World Rally Championship and the Fiesta Sporting Trophy in rallying and the UK Formula Ford Championship, as well as many other grass roots activities across Europe.

BP-Ford World Rally Team is based at M-Sport's Dovenby Hall premises in north-west England. It is here that the all-new 2006 specification Focus RS WRC, based on the highly successful Focus ST road car, was developed.

The team's major partner in the WRC is BP, via its BP Ultimate and Castrol brands.

### TECHNICAL SPECIFICATIONS:

#### **Engine:**

Ford 1998cc Pipobuilt I4 Duratec WRC engine. Four cylinders, 16 valves. Bore 85mm. Stroke 88mm. Pi electronic engine management system. Garrett turbocharger (with FIA required 34 mm inlet restrictor). Air intercooler. Catalytic converter.

#### **Power:**

300 bhp at 6000 rpm

#### **Torque:**

550 Nm at 4000 rpm

#### **Transmission:**

Permanent four-wheel drive with M-Sport designed active centre differential. Pi electronic differential control units. M-Sport/Ricardo five speed sequential gearbox with electro-hydraulically controlled shift. M-Sport / Sachs multi disc carbon clutch.

#### **Suspension:**

Front and rear: MacPherson struts (front) and Trailing-Arm (rear) with Reiger external reservoir dampers, adjustable in bump and rebound. Fully adjustable fabricated steel links. Front and rear anti-roll bars. Cast steel uprights. Ceramic wheel bearings.

#### **Brakes:**

Gravel (front and rear): 300mm Brembo ventilated discs with Brembo four piston monoblock calipers.

Asphalt (front and rear): 370mm Brembo ventilated discs with Brembo eight-piston monoblock calipers. Hydraulic handbrake; Adjustable front / rear bias.

#### **Steering:**

Power-assisted high-ratio (12:1) rack and pinion. One and a half turns lock to lock.

#### **Wheels:**

Gravel: 7in x 15in (magnesium) wheels with BF Goodrich 650mm tyres. Asphalt: 8in x 18in (magnesium) wheels with BF Goodrich 650mm tyres.

#### **Bodyshell:**

Unitary construction. Unique composite side panels. Welded T45 steel safety roll cage. Aerodynamic rear wing. Unique front 'bumper' treatment.

#### **Electronics:**

Full Pi chassis and engine data acquisition for on-event diagnostics and performance development.

#### **Fuel tank:**

FIA FT3 tank, 94 litre capacity, located centrally.

#### **Dimensions:**

Length: 4362mm; Width: 1800mm; Wheelbase: 2640mm; Weight: 1230kg minimum.

## *A Trundle In The Country* *My Unforgettable Experience in 2003*

*Written by Evan Rothman*

A metallic thud reverberates around the cockpit as the driver selects first gear from the sequential gearbox. My heart rate increases. A thin film of perspiration quickly forms on my palms. The driver blips the throttle once, twice. The revs begin to climb. The engine's sound begins to roar. He drops the clutch, lets go of the handbrake and before I can count to six, we are travelling at more than 100km/h on the dirt. A few short hundred metres later and the dirt road takes a gentle left curve and has a bump on the exit. At the speed we are travelling at, the curve seems more like a hairpin bend. I realise the driver does not intend to slow down. I take a deep breath and tense my muscles in anticipation of the expected crash. To my relief, it does not happen. We hit the bump, which sends the car airborne for a second before hitting the ground with a hard thud. This does not even slow the driver up; in fact, he is going even faster now. I look at the digital speedometer and all I can see is a terrifying number: 164. That is 164 km/h. I never expected that we were going that fast.

The Sasol DualFuel Volkswagen Rally Team were testing their vehicles on dirt roads at St Albans near Port Elizabeth. I was invited along to the test day to go for a much-anticipated drive in a rally car. My driver was Jan Habig, a four time South African National Rally Champion. The car I was driving in was the Sasol DualFuel Volkswagen Rally Golf 4. This combination of driver and vehicle has clinched two back-to-back South African National Rally Championships. South Africa's most successful rally car in the last four years has been the Volkswagen Golf 4. Initially introduced as a highly modified kitcar in 1999, the Golf has gone on to dominate the championship even in its more standard-looking guise. Sixteen victories in twenty-four starts were achieved in the first three years, and then total domination followed in 2002, with Jan Habig and Enzo Kuun piloting

the Golfs.

Jan Habig has won four drivers' titles (1997, 1999, 2001, 2002) and Douglas Judd five co-drivers' crowns - winning his extra title in 2000, when Habig finished second in that year's championship.

Jan Habig is a 42-year old family man. When he is not racing around gravel roads at speeds in excess of 200km/h, he spends his leisure time with his wife and three children in their hometown of Stanger. Owning several construction related companies and being a Volkswagen factory rally driver, I would think his spare time is rather limited. "I have very little time to spend with the wife and kids when I'm home because of my duties at my companies" said Habig. "So when I do see them, I make sure I have plenty of quality time."

His first event he competed in was the 1980 Midlands Rally in an old Datsun SSS 1600 where he finished ninth overall and first novice. "Highlights of my rallying career are the World Rally Championship (WRC) British RAC rally in 1994 in which I finished eighth overall; the WRC Rally Australia in which I finished sixteenth overall and winning a 200km long MotorPics Mountain Trial stage in 1999 by three seconds" he said. His worst rallying moment was in the 1998 Stannic Cape Rally. In that rally, he was disqualified for a "petty infringement of the rules." Asked what motivates him to rally, he said: "The competition and sense of achievement I gain from rallying, keeps me doing what I love most. I have a very competitive streak, in that if I lose a rally (come second), then I will give it 110 % in testing and 200 % in the next rally. Personally, achieving victory is important. I am paid to win rallies for Volkswagen and Sasol. Winning a stage, and a rally, in the most testing conditions, I feel a great sense of achievement and purpose."

"In this year's championship, I think it is even more difficult, and therefore challenging, to win a rally because there are about five or six potential rally winners at each event. In last year's championship, there were realistically only about two or three potential winners. So this year, I think, the championship winner will most likely come from having the car that lasts the longest and can take the punishment."

Volkswagen Racing Manager, South African-born Andre van der Watt, is highly regarded in international motor racing circles having been head of Volkswagen Racing International for five years. According to Mr van der Watt, the Golfs push out 190 kW of power and 235 Nm of torque. The car's rev limiter is adjustable, but in its race trim the Golf's rev limiter is set at 8 100 rpm. "The Golf, being a kitcar, is specifically designed and built to extract the best out of the car's already great chassis (handling) and powerplant. These are most probably the only two things on this Golf that are similar to the production version."

"When we began building this car, it was just a shell (the bare frame) with a roll cage. We have had to import the various parts and components from Volkswagen Germany's motorsport division. The Golf uses a six-speed Gemini sequential gearbox. It is the latest in gearbox technology, making gear changes efficient and quick. The clutch is, of course, a racing clutch. The clutch is sturdily manufactured to withstand the extreme punishment of being between a high power engine and a sequential gearbox, under near impossible conditions." "Recaro racing seats keep the driver and co-driver comfortable and safe while doing their thing out in the bush. A six-point safety harness holds them in place. It can withstand the very high G-forces exerted on the drivers during an accident and offering them all round support in such situations." The inside of the Rally Golf is state-of-the-art. Every little wire inside the



cockpit has been clipped down neatly. There is nothing loose or dangling in the car. Everything is spotlessly clean. There is not a single wire sticking out and there is weirdly no dust in the car anywhere. There is an absolute lack of sound deadening material in the car. Every engine noise, every stone that hits the car is heard inside the cockpit. The dashboard vaguely resembles that of a production Volkswagen Golf. It has been considerably modified to house the digital speedometer, tachometer and the co-drivers navigational equipment of trip meters and clocks. There is no central console in the car. It now houses the gear lever and handbrake.

According to Jan Habig, the Golf can achieve a mind-blowing acceleration of 0-200km/h in 600m. "The top speed of the car is dependant on gearing. For a tight and twisty rally with few high-speed stages, I will use a short-range gearbox. This improves the car's acceleration and low-down power. For a high-speed rally, a long-range gearbox is used. The gearing is directed more at top speed than at acceleration as in the short-range gearbox. The top speeds of the car range from 180km/h to 220km/h, dependant on the gearing."

"The Golf is an absolute pleasure to drive as it is so responsive," said Habig. This I can vouch for, as when he took me for a drive, the total control he has over the car is overwhelming. When I drive on the highway, both my hands are on the steering wheel; when Habig drives his Golf at 160 km/h on the gravel, he has one hand on the steering wheel and the other on the gear lever. The handling of the car is what really astounds me. Habig can do almost anything on the gravel and it seems that the car sticks to the gravel. This due to the



traction the car has. "Without traction it is rather useless having all that power beneath your right foot," Habig said. "For gravel stages, we use block treads. These tyres can be cut to add more tread patterns. The more effective the tyre is at going over the stones and at dispersing the little ones, the more traction the car has and therefore the quicker I can go. On tar stages, we normally use racing slick tyres. These tyres have no tread patterns because on tar the more tread patterns a tyre has, the less rubber there is on the tar. This, then, lowers the percentage of traction available to me." The Golfs use 15-inch Bridgestone tyres for the gravel stages and for the tar stages, it has 17-inch Bridgestone tyres. According to Habig: "For the tar stages, the greater the tyre the more traction the car has. For gravel stages, we need smaller tyres. It is easier to control the car over the stones and through mud with a slightly narrower tyre."

Racing down a gravel road, a sharp right hand corner is fast approaching us. The corner is now 100m or so away and he has still not taken his foot off the accelerator, yet alone started braking. With a quick half-turn of the steering wheel to the left (the opposite direction of the corner), the rear end of the car begins to drift outwards. He lightly pulls at the handbrake, turns the steering wheel to the right. The car is now magically going sideways into the corner; I can hardly see anything because of the plumes of dust the car is making. Habig nails the accelerator and we lurch forward at an incredible speed. He flicks through the gears; first, second, third, fourth and pulls the handbrake and we are drifting sideways into a left corner. Magic. As quickly as we enter the corner, we exit it. A few hundred metres down the road he hits the brakes and tells me he wants



to practise a pull-away. We count down: 3, 2, 1...Go! In a normal car if you pull-away quickly, you are pushed into the back into the seat. In the Golf, you cannot feel this acceleration because of the racing seat and the six-point safety belt. You can only see the nose of the car lift and dip whenever Habig accelerates or decelerates. The sound in the car is deafening: all I can hear is the loud engine roaring and the sound of rocks hitting the undertray of the Golf. This I can hear through my padded helmet. The helmet has a built-in radio and microphone that enables us to communicate to each other over the other noises.

All the time that Habig is driving, he is asking me questions. I kept thinking that he should stop trying to have a conversation with me and drive the car. This shows the ability that these drivers have: while driving, he speaks to me, fiddles with the many various switches mounted on the dashboard and is constantly adjusting the car's settings.

To deal with the high speeds involved in rallying, the co-drivers have to feed road instructions to the drivers for two corners ahead of where they are currently are on the road. As the dictum goes: "If you have to think about what to do in the corner, you are too late."

We approach the service area where the technicians eagerly await our arrival so that they can download the necessary technical data from our test. The euphoria of my drive will keep my adrenaline pumping for quite a few minutes after our drive and my wide smile will be there for many days to come. The deafening sound of silence is so overwhelming after the staccato sounds of rocks battering the undertray of the car and the screaming of the engine being pushed to the limits.

***Do you have a similar experience to share? Have you had the great fortune of meeting one of the Rallying world's greats? Please send me your stories to [evanrothman@gmail.com](mailto:evanrothman@gmail.com) or contact me at 083 452 6892.***

## *This week's favourite rallying car: 1960s Rallying MINI Cooper S*



### 1960s Rallying MINI Cooper S History:

#### Monte Carlo Rally Results for Mini

Year	Driver	Co-Driver	Result
1962	Pat Moss	Ann Wisdom	Ladies' Award
1963	Rauno Aaltonen	Tony Ambrose	3rd Place
1964	Paddy Hopkirk	Henry Liddon	Winner
	Timo Mäkinen	Patrick Vanson	4th Place
1965	Timo Mäkinen	Paul Easter	Winner
1967	Rauno Aaltonen	Henry Liddon	Winner
1968	Rauno Aaltonen	Henry Liddon	3rd Place
1968	Tony Fall	Mike Wood	4th Place
	Paddy Hopkirk	Ron Crellin	5th Place

The Mini Cooper S earned acclaim with Monte Carlo Rally victories in 1964, 1965, and 1967. Minis were initially placed first, second and third in the 1966 rally as well, but were disqualified after a controversial decision by the French judges. The disqualification related to the use of a variable resistance headlamp dimming circuit in place of a dual-filament lamp. It should be noted that the Citroën DS that was eventually awarded first place had illegal white headlamps but escaped disqualification. The driver of the Citroën, Pauli Toivonen, was reluctant to accept the trophy and vowed that he would never race for Citroën again. BMC probably received more publicity from the disqualification than they would have gained from a victory - but had the Mini not been disqualified, it would have been the only car in history to be placed in the top three on the Monte Carlo for six consecutive years.

**Would YOU like to see your favourite rally car featured HERE? Send me your suggestion, and it may appear in a forthcoming issue of **HANDBRAKES AND HAIRPINS!****

## *Wilken Will Be Back In Action For Osram Rally!*

Rallying is unpredictable at the best of times, none more so than for the Sasol/Konica Minolta Subaru Impreza Rally Team. Less than 24 hours after announcing that the Pretoria-based team would miss the Osram Rally on 17 and 18 August came the news that their new bodyshell will arrive in time to make the start ramp.

“It’s going to be touch and go”, said Team Director Flip Wilken. “The floods in the UK and our freight company let us down. The freight people kept promising us a delivery date but nothing happened, to the point we told our sponsors we would not be on the starting ramp in Bloemfontein. I put a lot of pressure on the company and now the bodyshell will arrive on Thursday, which is one week before we have to leave for Bloemfontein”.

Wilken continued: “The car will be painted inside and wrapped in plastic outside. It will appear in exactly the same Sasol and Konica Minolta livery as it has run all year. The difference is the white bits will be stickered and not painted – there’s just no time. Once that is done, it’s all hands on deck around the clock to get the car built and shipped to Bloemfontein”.

Charl added” I haven’t driven for two months and there’s no time to do any testing or even set up work. We’ll be lucky if we can set the wheel alignment. We’re going to be thrown in at the deep end. It’s not ideal, but I’m delighted for Sasol, Konica Minolta and Subaru – and the whole team – that we’ll be there”.

Greg Godrich packed his bags in a hurry and rushed to Pretoria to start preparation of the route notes. “If I have to stay in Pretoria and wield a spanner in the days before the rally, then I will”.

The Sasol/Konica Minolta Subaru Impreza N12B pair, winners of class N4 on the opening round in March on their debut, adds another very strong bow to Subaru’s leading presence in the production car championship.

The Sasol/Konica Minolta Subaru Impreza was destroyed in a high-speed multiple roll on the Total Rally in June; the engineered strength inherent in the Impreza allowed Charl and Greg to emerge without a scratch. ISSUED BY SUBARU SOUTH AFRICA.



## **PREVIEW: WRC Rally Deutschland** **(Friday 17 August - Sunday 19 August)**

The 2007 WRC calendar's recent sequence of six consecutive gravel rounds has come to an end, as the championship moves on to the Rallye Deutschland, the second asphalt fixture of the season.

Like January's Monte Carlo Rally, the German round is regarded as a sealed surface event but, as Guy Fréquelin explains, it's not quite as simple as that: "Depending on the weather, it can be something of a lottery as far as tyre calls go. The conditions can vary so much on a single stage that choices can sometimes be even more difficult to make than on the Monte."

The main feature of the Rally Deutschland is its cocktail of three distinct stage types which range from the labyrinth of narrow lanes and countless hairpins of the Mosel Valley vineyards, the soiled concrete, hinkelstein-lined tank tracks of the Baumholder military ranges and, finally, the fast and slippery Saarland stages, which this year's rally actually barely visits. In short, there is a little of something to suit all tastes.

Given the complex nature of the German round, it comes as no surprise to learn that Sébastien Loeb/Daniel Elena and Dani Sordo/Marc Martí are somewhat on their guards.

"People see us as the favourites, the team to beat," exclaims Seb. "But it won't be easy. In fact none of my wins in Germany have been. I have had some big fights there over the years and I can't see our rivals making life easy for us this time round. For me, this event is always a spe-

cial occasion because it takes place near my home region, Alsace, and I always have lots of supporters. I intend to give it my very best shot for them, as well as to try to notch up another win to put us back in the chase."

Although the cautionary words of the crews, who came first and second here last year, may come as a surprise, Guy Fréquelin's don't: "It's difficult not be wary going into an event where there is so much at stake. OK, I believe we are capable of scoring the sort of result that would put us back in the running in both title chases. I am also convinced that our crews and the Citroën C4 WRC have the necessary credentials, and I have no doubts about the motivation and will to win of everyone at Citroën Sport. Even so, I refuse to get carried away; I know only too well that it only takes a tiny detail to throw everything wide open. We have prepared as well as we can for this event; it's now up to us to ensure we don't waste the opportunity."

### **Questions to... Sébastien Loeb...**

***What is your analysis of the way Rally Finland went? It doubtlessly didn't go the way you were hoping?***

"To come third after finishing second in 2005 and 2006 wasn't the sort of result we wanted and we ended up dropping four points in the Drivers' championship. We did all we could to take the fight to our rivals, but that wasn't enough. There are three more fast gravel events to come, but our opponents won't have the benefit of local knowledge on those. We will need to match their level of perform-

ance again if we want to challenge for victory. I am not unduly worried, but I know we've got a great deal of work on our plates."

***You have won the Rallye Deutschland five times in a row and you are the favourite to win again this year...***

"...and I hope nobody beats me! To remain in the title chase, we will need to start scoring more points than Marcus Grönholm soon. If we don't, it's going to be very difficult to defend our crown. I hope we are able to fight for victory again, but it won't be easy. What with the weather, the frequently difficult tyre choices and the rest, it's not a simple event. I don't think you can say that Germany is to me what Finland is to Marcus. We both have similar knowledge of the German stages, which is something you can't say for Jyväskylä. Marcus has even contested the Rallye Deutschland one more time than me because he was here in 2001!"

***What is the secret behind your domination of this event?***

"I don't know if there is a secret! And even I had one, I wouldn't give it away! Seriously, though, we have often been quicker than our rivals in Germany and I think that's just because I feel comfortable on the stages. I'm not all that enamoured with the event when the conditions are difficult and hazards abound. I mean, who likes driving in rain on dry weather tyres? But perhaps my advantage is that I seem to cope well with that sort of situation..."

***...and questions to Dani Sordo.***





**What were the positive points of Rally Finland for you?**

“I still need to improve, but I feel I am getting more and more accustomed to the event’s specific terrain. I lacked consistency and I didn’t want to take too many risks on the new stages. We worked well with Citroën Sport’s technicians to find a set-up that enabled me to feel confident with the C4. I was sufficiently quick to figure in the top-five before retiring and that’s quite a satisfactory result for me on what was only my second attempt at the event in a WRC car.”

**Last year was also your very first visit to Germany with a WRC car. What do you remember of the 2006 event?**

“How can I forget it? It was the first time I was nominated as eligible to score Manufacturers’ points. That was fantastic. On top of that, the weekend went well: we ended up finishing second and I had great fun driving the Xsara.”

**What is your objective for the 2007 Rallye Deutschland? Do you feel under more pressure than usual?**

“We’re under pressure all season long; it’s something you have to come to terms with. Perhaps I’m a little more anxious than last year because many people will have high expectations of me and I’m known as an asphalt driver. I will need to show that Guy Fréquelin was right to have confidence in me and, for that, I will need have a good run and try to finish ahead of our rivals. I don’t want to get carried away, though, because that’s by no means a foregone conclusion.”

**The 2007 ADAC Rallye Deutschland in brief...**

\* Although the event was first organised in 1982, it has only been a qualifying round of the World Rally Championship since 2002. This is consequently the sixth running of the ADAC Rallye Deutschland. The event also counts towards the Ger-

man national championship, of which it is the fourth (Friday) and fifth (Saturday) rounds.

\* This year, all the event’s facilities (HQ, media room, parc ferme, etc.) are based in Trier. The service park is located by the Mosel River in the Trier Messepark to the south of the city. Trier itself is only kilometres from the French and Luxembourg borders and is one of Germany’s oldest cities. Its monuments include the Porta Nigra which was built by the Romans in the fourth century B.C.

\* The total length of the 2007 route is 1,227.04km, including 356.27km divided into 19 stages (10 different).

\* Recce is scheduled for Tuesday August 14 (between 09.00 and 15.30 – stages 7/11, 8/12, 9/13 and 10/14). Recce of the super-special (SS17) takes place on the Tuesday evening, between 20.30 and 20.50. The second day of recce is Wednesday August 15 (between 08.00 and 16.15 – stages 1/4, 2/5, 3/6, 15/18 and 16/19). Two runs are authorised at specific times at a maximum speed of 90kph.

\* Shakedown takes place on Thursday August 16 (from 08.00 until noon) and uses a 5.32km test stage near the village of Mesenich, 12.02km east of the service park in Trier.

\* The start ceremony will be held on Thursday August 16 in front of the Porta Nigra de Trier (from 20.00).

\* One ‘safety crew’ per crew is authorised. Their role is to cover each stage before the competitors.

\* Engines: Sébastien Loeb’s engine is the one he used in Finland and was sealed after the finish in Jyväskylä. Dani Sordo will have a new engine for the Rallye Deutschland. The chassis used in Germany are not paired with another event.

\* There are two gearboxes available for this event and for Catalonia.

\* Tyres: the quota per driver is 60 tyres, of which 43 may be used (event and shake-

down). The list of nominated tyres and patterns (two) are registered with the FIA on Monday August 13.

\* Since the Rallye Deutschland’s addition to the WRC calendar, Citroën, Sébastien Loeb and Daniel Elena have been unbeaten on this event. In addition to their straight wins from 2002 through to 2006, Philippe Bugalski/Jean-Paul Chiaroni won the pre-WRC rally in 2001 with their Citroën Xsara WRC.

\* Sébastien Loeb and Daniel Elena won all five of their participations with the Citroën Xsara in consecutive years. It is on this event that they claimed their first world class win.

\* This is the fourth participation of Dani Sordo in the Rallye Deutschland: 2006 (Citroën Xsara with Marc Martí/2nd), 2005 (Citroën C2 S1600 with Marc Martí/13th overall and 1st in JWRC) and 2004 (Mitsubishi Lancer and Carlos Del Barrio/19th).

\* Marc Martí has taken part in the event every year since 2002: 2006 (Citroën Xsara with Dani Sordo /2nd), 2005 (Citroën C2 Super 1600 with Dani Sordo/13th and 1st JWRC), 2004 (Citroën Xsara with Carlos Sainz/3rd), 2003 (Citroën Xsara with Carlos Sainz/6th), 2002 (Citroën Xsara with Jesús Puras/retired).

\* Three privately-run Citroën Xsara WRCs have been entered. OMV Kronos Citroën World Rally Team has entered cars for Manfred Stohl/Ilka Minor and François Duval/Patrick Pivato, while PH Sport will run a car for Toni Gardemeister/Jakke Honkanen.

Live results, interviews with members of the team and news updates after every service halt at [www.citroen.com](http://www.citroen.com).

## *Socio-Economic Impact Analysis for FIA World Rally Championship*

A group of leading universities across the world is to work on a major research project examining the socio-economic impact of the FIA World Rally Championship (WRC). The new initiative, covering five countries, will draw together leading sports research centres.

The project will involve five universities covering World Rally Championship events in Finland, New Zealand, Spain, Germany and Ireland. The lead institution in the project is the University of Ulster (Ireland), which will work closely with associates at the University of Jyväskylä (Finland), Universidad Autónoma de Madrid (Spain), Auckland University of Technology (New Zealand) and the University of Zweibrücken (Germany).

Morrie Chandler, President of the WRC Commission said: “The FIA recognises the importance of having well-researched information. The promoter of the events in each of these countries will work closely with its local research partner to provide a worldwide view of the true value of the World Rally Championship. The intention is that, in the following year, this research will be expanded to gain in international impact profile.”

Dr. David Hassan, from the University of Ulster, Sport and Exercise Sciences Research Institute (SESRI) said: “This is a very exciting development and the WRC is to be commended for demonstrating such foresight. In an expanding sports marketplace it is inevitable that all sports will have to outline their value to sponsors, public bodies and the media.”

The research, which will commence on August 3 at the ninth round of the series in Finland, will conclude with the first-ever staging of an FIA WRC event in Ireland on November 16. The report from the first phase of the research will be presented to the World Rally Championship Commission in January 2008.

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*Thanks to suppliers of news and photographs: Subaru World Rally Team, Citroen Press, BP-Ford World Rally Team, Toyota South Africa, Volkswagen South Africa and Subaru South Africa.*

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*I invite you to please send me your thoughts and suggestions on this new newsletter. I look forward to hearing from you! Send your message to:*

***evanrothman@gmail.com***

## **PREVIEW: OSRAM RALLY** **(Friday 17 to Saturday 18 August)**



PHOTO: [www.motorpics.co.za](http://www.motorpics.co.za)

The three-car Castrol Toyota team heads into the Osram Rally leading the overall and class S2000 championships, while the class A7 title already locked away firmly out of their rival's reach.

Toyota, chasing their 16th Manufacturer's Championship – a record - has a handy but by no means comfortable 379 point advantage over rivals Volkswagen and would dearly like to extend that margin in the year that Toyota celebrates 50 years of worldwide motorsport participation.

“We need another good result on the Osram Rally”, said the 73 times rally winner and ten times driver's champion Serge Damseaux. “This is one of the closest seasons in memory and requires 110% effort over the whole rally, especially as it is such a short event. The stages are quite long and there is simply no room for error. It's maximum attack all the way”.

Serge continued: “The S2000 class is the best we've had in South Africa, and it's getting closer. On the last two rallies, one or other of the top three places have been tied on times on the first day and positions change in the final 1200 metres – it's really exciting and very challenging”.

The second Castrol Toyota RunX RSi driven by Johnny Gemmell and Peter Marsh will be out to score points towards Toyota's manufacturer's championship and put as much distance

between Serge and the trio of VW Polos as possible.

“The plan is to help Serge take as many points away as possible, so we plan on spoiling the VW party by putting ourselves between him and the rest of the field. The rally itself is neither a very technically demanding event nor a car breaker, as the roads are quite smooth. Many of the stages are really fast with long straights between the farms”, said Johnny.

For newly crowned class A7 champions Mark Cronje and Chris Birkin, it's a straightforward game plan. “Flat out”, says Mark. “We are going to have fun without any of the championship pressures.”

“We're definitely going to enjoy the rally – more so than usual”. The Castrol Toyota RunX RSi has racked up five consecutive class wins in class A7, the premier two-wheel drive class in rallying.

Backing up the Castrol Toyota squad is the ten-car team of Team Total-backed Toyotas, headed by Etienne Lourens/ Andre Vermeulen in their S2000 RunX RSi.

Jean-Pierre Damseaux/Cobus Vrey (S2000 Team Total Toyota RunX RSi) are enjoying their first season in rallying's top class and have scored a series of solid results until JP blotted his copybook on the Total Rally.

Chris de Wit/Dean Redelinghuys (Team Total Toyota RunX RSi) return to the class A7 skirmish after missing the last round, eager to show their true form. De Wit is a multiple class N3 champion with the late Patrick Yende but has yet to shine in his latest machinery.

Class A6 sees a trio of Team Total entries vying for honours. Former champion Craig Trott and co-driver Carolyn Swan leads the championship chase in their Team Total Toyota RunX RS by 14 points.

Class N3, the top two-wheel driven production car class, features another Team Total Toyota RunX RSi trio. This intense rivalry is led by Rodney Visagie/ Arno Lagrange in their RunX. They are a single point ahead of the N3 season long leader Michael Houghton/Hennie Botes, who dropped out of the last round.

The Osram Rally starts from the Windmill Casino in Bloemfontein at 15h00 on Friday, 17 August before heading to two new stages at the Bloemfontein Showgrounds, where fans can sit on the stands and watch two stages without moving.

Saturday's action starts at 07h00 and takes the field straight to Dewetsdorp for a further eight high-speed stages before returning to Bloemfontein late afternoon.

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