

Handbrakes and Hairpins

Issue 04

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Gronholm Just-Just Clinches Victory In New Zealand

The World Rallying Championship has just witnessed the most intense and exciting event in recent times. Not only has this year's WRC Rally of New Zealand gone down in the history books, but many more fans have been drawn to spectacular sport that is rallying.

For background information to this article, I searched a few websites. Many fans the world over now proclaim WRC as THE most thrilling motorsport series in the world. And with a winning margin of only 0,3 seconds over second place finishers, it is not difficult to understand why.

Marcus Gronholm and Timo Rautiainen (BP-Ford World Rally Team) took the coveted winner's trophy home, followed by Sebastien Loeb and Daniel Elena (Total Citroen World Rally Team) with the BP-Ford Focus of team-mate Mikko Hirvonen in third place.

The Flying Finn managed to pull out the most slender of gaps on the very last stage of the rally to pull off the win. The difference in time at the end of the event was a record-breaking three

tenths of a second. This is after a total of 350km of Special Stages! I worked out that 0,3 seconds equates to half a car length in terms of distance! It was an awesome performance by both Gronholm and Loeb! Hats off to the boys!

Gronholm's superlative victory now extends his lead in the Driver's Championship by two points to ten ahead of Loeb. Ford has a comfortable lead over Citroen with 46 points separating them.

"It was an incredible fight all weekend and this win is fantastic for my championship hopes," exclaimed Gronholm. "It's the closest and best battle in my career and I'm delighted to have won it. There wasn't room for a single missed gearchange. I'm really happy for the team, more so because everyone was able to stand outside and watch the final stage near the service park and share in our excitement when we knew we had done it. I stayed calm in the rally car and that's something I've learned from many years' practice of attacking. The only big stress came with choosing tyres because the conditions were



inconsistent and when it's as close as it has been here, then one wrong tyre choice would have ruined everything. It's good to extend my championship lead and I think it's going to be a great end to the season."

Gronholm, a former WRC Champion, and Loeb exchanged places throughout the rally, with each driver hoping the other would make a mistake.

The rally proper got underway on Day Two, and the conditions seemed tricky. Rain fell early in the morning, leaving the roads wet and slippery. Tyre choice was critical, and Loeb's Citroën C4 took the early advantage with a two second gap over Gronholm after the day's stiff competition.

Day Three provided more of the same weather conditions as Day Two as intermittent rain played havoc for rally engineers. In the meantime, Gronholm had managed to close the gap between himself and the Frenchman to 0,7 seconds going into the final stage.

Surface conditions apparently deteriorated throughout the final stages, and this made Loeb drive more conservatively. Loeb decided to settle for second place, instead of crashing out on the final stage. "I didn't get off to the best of starts," admitted Loeb. "There was absolutely no grip on the first stage (SS12) and I didn't manage to find the ideal pace. Marcus passed ahead by a tenth of a second but the rest of the morning went better



for us. My Citroen C4 WRC was very competitive and enabled me to push harder on SS13 and SS14 which I won to regain the lead. The gap was less than three seconds, however, and the final loop promised to be extremely close. We managed to stay level with Marcus in many places, but we dropped time on each test. On top of that, rain started to fall just as we were about to start two of the stages. That's rallying. I pushed as hard as I could but it was always at the back of my mind that eight points for finishing second would be better than a blank scorecard in terms of the fight for the Drivers' title."

This was all Gronholm needed to seal the victory. He pushed his BP-Ford Focus hard in the final stage, and it rewarded him with a win.

Gronholm's team-mate, Mikko Hirvonen, had a rough start to the rally, and quickly fell behind the pace set by the duelling champions ahead of him. The young rally ace kept working hard over the course of the weekend to make sure he went home with third place overall, and to bring home valuable Constructors' points for Ford. Hirvonen now sits only eleven points behind Loeb in points. By the end of the rally he was all alone, sitting with a 50 second cushion between himself and Loeb, as well as over Chris Atkinson (Subaru World Rally Team) in fourth position.

"I made one wrong tyre choice on Friday and I was out of the battle," said Hirvonen. "I'm not upset with third and I've enjoyed the weekend but I was a little unhappy with my driving and not being able to join Seb and Marcus in the fight for victory. But I feel like I've learned how to drive here and it was important for the team to get the points for third."

Atkinson beat off a hard-charging Jari-Matti Latvala (Stobart Ford World Rally Team) to take fourth. Atkinson, who showed maturity in his driving in this rally, consistently finished in the top five in all stages.

"That was a great fight for fourth, and I'm very happy that we came out on top," commented Atkinson. "It's great for the guys in the team too, and it shows we're getting closer all the time. It would have been nice to be on the podium, and hopefully that's no far away. I think we've had enough fourths now - we want some thirds, seconds and firsts! Overall it's been a pretty good rally. We've battled hard all weekend, tried to fight when we could and be cautious when things haven't worked so well. We did our best, and that's all I can do. It's back to asphalt next, and I'm certainly looking forward to that."

The next event is a tarmac rally, the WRC Rally of Catalunya in Spain. Loeb is favourite to win this rally, but Gronholm will be out to prove his BP-Ford Focus the quicker car. Whoever you support in the WRC, the next rally will be a thriller! Read the next issue of **HANDBRAKES AND HAIRPINS** for the latest news.



WRC Team Biography:

OMV Kronos Citroen World Rally Team

2006 Citroen Xsara WRC:

Engine Installation: front-mounted, transverse.

Number of cylinders: 4

Capacity: 1 998 cc

Bore x stroke: 86mm x 86mm

@ 5500 rpm

Head: aluminium

Valves: 4 per cylinder

Cylinder block: aluminium; Double overhead camshaft

Engine management: MAGNETI-MARRELLI 2KR

Turbocharger: GARRETT TR30R

Lubrication: via carbon wet sump

Fuel feed: Injection electronic control

Heat exchange:

Air – Air

Lubrication: via carbon wet sump

Dimensions:

Type: monocoque

Wheelbase: 2.555 m

Length: 4.167 m

Width: 1.770 m

Height: 1.390 m

Wheels: O.Z 8x18" (7x15*)

Tyres: BFGOODRICH 18" on tarmac, 15" on gravels, 16" on

snow

Weight: 1230 kg

Fuel tank capacity: 90 litres

Fuel tank: aluminium, controlled and supplied by the FIA

Brakes: Front - Vented 376 mm diameter discs and 6-pot calipers (310mm*)

Rear - 318 mm diameter discs (310mm*)

*4-pot calipers

(* Loose surface version)

Transmission:

Clutch: Carbone, 6" triple plate

Gearbox: transverse, 6 speed X-Trac CSP

Controls: located on steering wheel

Differentials: passive front, rear and active central

Steering:

Type: power steering, rack and pinion

Suspension:

Front: pseudo McPherson

Rear: pseudo McPherson

Shock absorbers: Extrem Tech



Jean-Pierre Mondron and Marc Van Dalen founded Kronos Racing in 1994. Their association was not a chance encounter: both were long-time car racing fans and both had been circuit and rally drivers.

It was thus quite natural for them to start an exciting endeavour together, that would give them the opportunity to live their passion to the full, each and every day.



Office Politics:

Team Principal: Marc Van Dalen and Jean-Pierre Mondron

Drivers: Manfred Stohl and Daniel Carlsson

Car: 2006 Citroen Xsara WRC

Headquarters: Namur, Belgium.

Established: 1994.

REMEMBERING: Richard Burns



WRITTEN BY EVAN ROTHMAN

Richard Burns (January 17, 1971 – November 25, 2005), born in Reading, Berkshire, England, was a former World Rally Champion in 2001. Burns died at the age of 34, after having been in a coma for some days as a result of a brain tumour.

At the tender age of eight, Burns learnt to drive his father's old Triumph 2000. At eleven, Burns joined the Under 17 Car Club, where he was voted as Driver of the Year in 1984. Two years later, he attended Jan Churchill's Welsh Forest Rally School for the day, driving a Ford Escort. This day ignited the rallying flame in him!

He was spotted by rally enthusiast David Williams, who in 1990 bought Burns a Peugeot 205 GTI to compete in the Peugeot Challenge. It was the following year that he met Robert Reid, his co-driver for the next twelve years.

1993 saw Burns join the Subaru Rally Team in the British Rally Championship, where he won four rallies in his first year, making him the British Rally Championship's youngest ever champion that year.

In 1996, He signed up with the Mitsubishi World Rally Team to take on the world's beat in the WRC. 1998 saw Burns lift the winner's trophy on a WRC event, the Safari Rally.

Richard Burns and Robert Reid switched to the more competitive Subaru World Rally Team for 1999, which resulted in him finishing the season runner-up, as well as in 2000.

2001 proved to be a magical year for Burns, as he was crowned WRC Champion in his Subaru, making him the first Englishman to win the Championship.

When Burns passed the finishing line at the final stage of the final rally in 2001 the famous words popped out of his mouth paying tribute to his co-driver, Robert Reid: "You're the best in the world".

Burns and Reid moved to Peugeot for the 2002 season and he later ended his career with the French team. In November 2003, with the Englishman heading to the season-ending Wales Rally GB still in the frame to duke it out for that title, Burns suffered a blackout while driving to the rally. He was withdrawn from the event, and thus the title fight, and duly diagnosed with an astrocytoma, a type of brain tumour. He did have a brief stint out of hospital in summer of 2004, only to be made to return, undergoing chemotherapy and radiotherapy, as well as surgery in April 2005 that was described as "very successful".

Late on Friday, November 25, 2005, four years to the day after winning the World Rally Championship, Burns passed away.

World Rally Championship

World rallies: 104

Wins: 10

Stage wins: 277

First win: 1998 Safari Rally

Last world rally: 2003 Rally Catalunya

Championships: 1 (2001)

Podium finishes: 34

Points: 351

Last win: 2001 New Zealand



This Week's Favourite Rallying Car: *Toyota Celica GT-Four*



The Toyota Celica GT-Four is a high performance model, with a turbocharged 3S-GTE engine, and full-time 4WD. It was created to compete in the World Rally Championship, whose regulations dictate that a manufacturer must build road-going versions of the vehicle in sufficient numbers. These vehicles are referred to as “homologation special vehicles.”

And we are very grateful indeed that Toyota decided to build these road cars, otherwise we would not have been witness to one of the most impressive rally cars.

The Celica GT-Four came in three generations: ST165, based on the fourth generation Celica, the ST185, and the ST205. The Celica GT-Four rally cars were prepared by Toyota Team Europe in Germany, and made their WRC debut in 1988 on the Tour de Corse. It was only until 1989 on the WRC Rally of Australia that the Celica GT-Four won its maiden rally. The ST185, successor to the ST165, made its debut on the 1992 Rallye Monte Carlo, and went on to win four events that year, proving it to be the most successful Toyota rally car in WRC.

In 1992, it brought home the WRC Driver's title, and in 1993 and 1994 it walked home with both the Constructor's and Driver's titles.

The significance of the Toyota Celica GT-Four in WRC history, previously dominated by European manufacturers, is that it was the first time a Japanese car manufacturer entered the WRC with an AWD turbocharged car, took trophies and won races, turning the WRC world upside down. This achievement by Toyota has led to the involvement of Subaru, Mitsubishi, Honda and Suzuki in the WRC. Toyota exited WRC to concentrate their racing efforts in Formula One.

Toyota Team Europe (TTE) was also the first to introduce the anti-lag system (ALS) in their ST205 Celica GT-Four cars, a technological breakthrough that was later adopted by other teams.

Specifications:

Weight: 1100 kg

Engine Location: Front , transversely mounted.

Valvetrain: 4 valves /cylinder, DOHC.

Power: 220 KW @ 5700 rpm

Engine: 3S-GTE Straight 4

Displacement: 1998cc

Gearbox: 6-speed Manual

Torque: 459 Nm @ 4000 rpm



Suzuki's New SX4 WRC Car Readies For Action

Suzuki, who are currently competing in the fast-action Junior World Rally Championship, have already achieved some level of success on the international rallying stage.

As of next year, Suzuki Sport will be entering its first WRC season with its new SX4 WRC Rally Car.

In April and June of this year, the team tackled tarmac and gravel tests in earnest. It is reported that the WRC car used in the tests is close to what is planned to be used next year.

Throughout the testing periods, the team felt the car had improved significantly, in terms of performance and reliability.

The Suzuki SX4 will be running a 1 996cc turbocharged motor, which has 16 valves, four valves per cylinder.

It develops 235,5kW of power at 4 000rpm and a massive 637,3Nm of torque at 3 000rpm.

As with other WRC machines, the Suzuki WRC is equipped with a sequential transmission, operated by a three-disc carbon clutch. It has paddle mounted behind the steering wheel for super-quick gearshifts.

As more information and specifications are released, I will publish them in *Handbrakes and Hairpins*.



Atkinson To Stay At Subaru until 2009



The Subaru World Rally Team has extended its driver contract with 27-year-old Chris Atkinson until the end of the 2009 World Rally Championship season, according to SWRT.com.

Acknowledged as one of the most exciting young drivers in the WRC, Australian-born Atkinson was first signed by Subaru in 2005, and made his competitive debut on that season's WRC Rally of Sweden.

In his short career thus far in WRC, he has started a total of 42 rallies for the Japanese manufacturer, and recorded his best result, third overall, on the WRC Rally of Japan in 2005. So far this year, Atkinson has managed to finish fourth on three WRC rallies and has set 12 fastest stage times.

"I'm delighted to announce that we have secured Chris's services for a further two seasons," said Subaru World Rally Team managing director Richard Taylor. "Over the last 12 months he has shown excellent pace on many occasions and is now back-

ing this up by producing strong results.

"Chris's driving has clearly moved up a level in recent events and we expect to see him on the podium before the end of this season. I look forward to Subaru giving him his first WRC victory in the not too distant future," added Taylor.

"It's great news, and I'm very much looking forward to continuing my relationship with Subaru," said Atkinson. "Even though the last couple of seasons haven't always been easy, I think our recent results show we've turned a corner now with the performance of the car, and I'm confident we'll see improved form as we go forward. It's an exciting time to be part of Subaru's WRC programme and a terrific opportunity for me personally. There is an excellent team of people in the UK and Japan who all want to see a Subaru on the top step of the podium, and you can be sure I'll be doing everything I can to make that happen."



Do you have an interesting rallying story to tell? Me and the rest of the Handbrakes and Hairpins readers would love to read it.. Please send me a few short paragraphs with the basic facts, and I will bash it together into proper English for all to read. My e-mail address is handhnews@gmail.com. I look forward to hearing from you!

Gardemeister Nets New Co-Driver

During the 2007 season, Toni Gardemeister has rallied at selected WRC events. In forthcoming races Gardemeister will be seen with his new co-driver, Tomi Tuominen.

Tuominen is a very familiar face for Finnish motorsport competitors, spectators and fans. His motorsport career began in 1991 and this year he has been a commentator for WRC television broadcasts on Finnish national television.

Tuominen is obviously excited about his new job, as it has been a long-term project of his.

“I’ve always dreamed of working in the WRC with a driver who possesses chances for success,” he shared. “Now that dream comes true. I will do everything in my power to assist Gardemeister in reaching our goals.”

Gardemeister explained how his decision came about: “In the end there was only one true candidate for replacing my ex-co-driver Jakke Honkanen.

In early spring I victoriously competed in the Italian 1000 Miglia and in June at the Finnish Rally Championship event with Tomi Tuominen. I was convinced of the skills Tomi has as a co-driver and saw his experience in the WRC. My choice for new co-driver was very obvious. Also Tuominen has gained two Finnish Rally Champion titles as a co-driver. During the 2004 and 2006 seasons he won the titles with eight-time Finnish Rally Champion Sebastian Lindholm.”

The first World Rally Championship event for the duo has not yet been decided due to negotiations which are underway.



Duval To Compete In WRC Rally Catalunya For OMV Kronos

Following Francois Duval's impressive performance at last months Rally Deutschland, OMV Kronos have opted to sign Duval to drive the second Citroen Xsara in the upcoming Rally Catalunya tarmac rally in Spain.

It is hoped that Duval will be able to place himself between Citroen's Sebastien Loeb and championship leader, BP Ford's Marcus Gronholm. Keeping Gronholm behind Duval will help Sebastien Loeb catch the current championship leader, who currently leads by 10 points.

Duval last competed in Spain last year, driving a privately entered Skoda Fabia WRC run by First Motorsport. He was able to finish sixth outright, and claimed an equal fastest stage time along the way.

In 2005 however, Duval drove a Citroen Xsara not dissimilar to the one he will be driving in a few weeks time. He finished second outright behind Sebastien Loeb.

"It is true that the victory of Marcus this weekend (Rally NZ) puts a little more the pressure on the championship. In any case, I will do the utmost to again take points away from Ford.

"It will not be easy to repeat the result from Germany. Nevertheless, I will do my best to help Citroen and hope my supporters will be there to cheer me on."

Total Citroen Sport WRC Team To Enter Cork Rally



Citroën Sport has decided to enter two cars for the Cork 20 International Rally (September 28 - September 30) with a view to honing its preparations for the final phase of the 2007 WRC season.

The inaugural Rally Ireland, the fifteenth and penultimate round of this year's World Rally Championship, is scheduled to take place on November 15-18 and its inclusion for the first time in the WRC calendar has prompted a long list of questions regarding the profile of the atypical stages competitors can expect to find.

Sébastien Loeb, Daniel Elena, the C4 WRC and Citroën Sport were able to gain an initial idea of the country's roads thanks to their participation on last June's Donegal Rally. Victory on that event enabled the team to glean a great deal of valuable information.

"To build up an even bigger picture of the Irish stages," explains Team Principal Guy Fréquelin, "Citroën Sport has decided to enter two cars for the Cork Rally."

"Sébastien Loeb and Daniel Elena will be able to gain extra experience of these highly specific roads at the wheel of a C4 WRC, while Dani Sordo and Marc Marti will get their first taste of competition in the country with a Xsara WRC, since Citroën Sport has no other C4s available for the weekend in question," he explained.

South African Regional Rallying: KZN Hi-Q RallySprint



Pour Some Sugar On Me!

Written by Evan Rothman

Last Saturday I headed to Stanger to spectate and cheer on the drivers taking part in the Hi-Q KwaZulu-Natal regional rally, the third last event on the 2007 calendar.

A strong field of 14 competitors entered the rally on the north coast, with the course laid out through winding sugar cane field roads. The weather was hot and humid (like it always is in KZN), making the roads dusty and slippery.

KwaZulu-Natal Regional Rally championship leaders Chris de Wit and Tony Ball (Team Total Toyota RunX RSi) were looking to add another victory to their tally this year, and coming from a successful National rally, De Wit was eager to lead the teams home. The two father and daughter crews of Richard and Laura Vaughn (Mitsubishi Lancer) and Brian and Kirsty Scott (Scotty's Plant Hire Volkswagen Polo) were hoping to spoil De Wit and Ball's plans.

This event, a sprint rally, is held over a single stage, which is repeated to make up the rally distance. One loop of this stage was 17km long, so competitors had to complete three laps of the tough course. The nature of these short and repeated stages is that any slight mistake on any of the stages would cost a team a win, and put them right down the leaderboard.

First on the road was Chris de Wit and Tony Ball, who managed to post a respectable second fastest stage time, behind Richard and Laura Vaughn (Mitsubishi Lancer). Brian and Kirsty Scott unfortunately never completed the first stage, suffering from mechanical problems. The Scott's repaired their rally car,

but were forced to retire from the event after Stage Two with a broken drive shaft.

The attrition rate was high on this rally, as a total of 6 crews retired from the event. This included Chris de Wit and Tony Ball who went off the road after breaking their steering arm on Stage Two, Nico and Jacques van Rooyen, John Thompson, Dave Mobley and Jarret van der Berg, Leon van Rooyen and Lou Zietsman. With the end of the season in sight, the weary cars were showing the battle scars from previous rallies.

The rally was won by Richard and Laura Vaughn with a 1min 58 sec gap over Bertus Labuschagne and Lou Zietsman, with Rob Spencer and Gareth Mumford 14 seconds adrift of Labuschagne/Zietsman. Fourth place went to Mark Mumford and Shereless Mumford, fifth to the Pietermaritzburg-based team of Clyde Victor and Mark King, Peter Teague and Amon Meyiwa took sixth, Thane Archer and Natasha Vaughn seventh and Robert Clark and Walter Baard finished eighth.

Fast cars, dusty roads and skilled drivers made for a fun day's spectating. Rallying is a great sport, and is growing in popularity the world over.

Results:

- | | |
|--|-------------|
| 1) Richard Vaughn and Laura Vaughn | 44min 14sec |
| 2) Bertus Labuschagne and Lou Zietsman | 46min 16sec |
| 3) Rob Spencer and Gareth Mumford | 46min 27sec |
| 4) Mark Mumford and Shereless Mumford | 49min 05sec |
| 5) Clyde Victor and Mark King | 49min 18sec |
| 6) Peter Teague and Amon Meyiwa | 51min 36sec |
| 7) Thane Archer and Natasha Vaughn | 51min 36sec |
| 8) Robert Clark and Walter Baard | 54min 47sec |



Total Swartland Rally Preview *(21 September 2007 to 22 September 2007)*

Make or Break!

The Total Swartland Rally, which takes place next weekend (21 and 22 September), in the Western Cape, is sure to set the stage for an exciting finish to the 2007 Sasol South Africa National Rally Championship. This, to be the seventh round of the national championship, is running in the place of the Cape Subaru Rally.

It will be a closely fought battle for the win in the upcoming rally, as there are only four points separating the top four positions on the leaderboard! It goes without saying that winning the Total Swartland Rally will be critical in the championship.

Hergen Fekken (S2000 BP Volkswagen Polo) is leading the championship on 102 points, ahead of joint second placed runners Serge Damseaux (S2000 Castrol Toyota RunX) and Jannie Habig (S2000 BP Volkswagen Polo). Fourth-placed Enzo Kuun (S2000 BP Volkswagen Polo) is on 96 points, and is looking for a win at this rally.

Rob Marle of the Cape Peninsula Motorcycle and Car Club and Clerk of the Course of the TOTAL

Swartland Rally, says that it is not going to be a fun event. Competitors who think that they have seen all the roads in the Western Cape are in for a bit of a surprise, he said. "The rain has not made our job much easier. The farmers believe that the rain will be gone in a week's time, but at the moment it does not look like letting up. Some of the roads will be rougher than usual, but the very rough parts will be repaired", Marle said.

The rally starts at the Killarney Race Track on Friday 21 September at 12:00. The first stage will be around the Hopefield Road and the second stage will be a 49,9km scorcher before the cars return to Killarney for the final three tar stages of the day.

On Saturday the competitors will do another four gravel stages before the final stage at Killarney where the Swartland Rally will finish at about 16:00. Given the fact that there are only 10 stages of which four will be on tar the rest of the stages will also be longer.

Marle expects a full house of entries as the Total Swartland Rally may settle more than just who will be the overall champion for 2007.



