



Wales Rally GB

10th – 13th November

13th of 13 rounds of the FIA World Rally Championship

Day One.

Wales, 10th November 2011. Day One of Wales Rally GB may only have been made up of three stages and 25.25 kilometres of competition, but it proved tough for some drivers. However, the MINI WRC Team drivers, Kris Meeke (GB) and Paul Nagle (IR) and Dani Sordo (ES) and Carlos del Barrio (ES), took it steadily and at the overnight halt in Llandudno, in the north of Wales, were fifth and sixth respectively.

Right from the word go on the first two stages over Llandudno's Great Orme tarmac roads Sordo and Meeke were extremely cautious. Even though the weather was bright and sunny, the stage was slippery and caught out Sébastien Ogier (FR) who ripped off a wheel 1.6 kilometres into the stage. On this first stage Sordo was the quicker of the two MINIs by 0.8secs, and then on stage two it was Meeke by 0.9secs. Therefore as they left the tarmac and headed to the first forest stage in Clocaenog Meeke was fifth and Sordo sixth overall with 0.1secs separating them. Then on stage three, run over 15.77 kilometres of gravel, it was Meeke who was quickest, and at the end of the day was 8.6secs ahead of his team-mate.

The two MINI John Cooper Works WRCs were displaying the logos of 'Paint it Orange', a campaign being run by the Richard Burns Foundation with all the proceeds benefiting the charity's work in brain injury and illness. This event marks the tenth anniversary of Richard Burns' World title.

Dave Wilcock, Technical Director:

"The first part of the rally is over almost before it has begun. I don't know what was going on at the front on the Great Orme, but there was all sorts of activity and Sébastien Ogier took himself out almost immediately. Our drivers kept it clean and tidy, and put themselves in good positions after those first two stages. Unfortunately, due to the timing of the event, we ran into the darkness, and our road positions really didn't help us at all. This was not helped by the fact the visibility was getting worse all the time, and the road surface was also getting a lot more slippery with every car. We were a little bit handicapped. Dani was struggling with the foggy patches and general visibility more than Kris. Kris had a blinding run through Clocaenog for his road position, so we were extremely pleased with that. Let's see how we get on tomorrow when the rally really starts."

Dani Sordo (MINI John Cooper Works WRC No 37):

"The last stage was quite tricky, but really beautiful. The problem was the visibility was bad with a lot of fog in the middle of the stage. Also it was not completely dark so we could not see very well. We were driving with the lights on as it was getting dark, but it was probably better without them on. After the tarmac stage the Michelin tyres were okay, despite doing two passes of the stage. I am happy with the car as it is getting better and better after each rally we do."





Kris Meeke (MINI John Cooper Works WRC No 52):

"I am not so bad. The tarmac stages were quite tricky, and when it got a little bit humid then it was quite slippery. We were sitting on the start line and got the information about Sébastien Ogier, so we had to be calm. We had a very good run in the forest stage, but I am not happy that some people were running in the daylight and some in the darkness. I feel the organisers have to think seriously about this. To be fifth is possibly where we expected to be, so I am happy."

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