



Rally France-Alsace 29th September – 2nd October 11th of 13 rounds of the FIA World Rally Championship

Preview.

Munich, 23rd September, 2011. The MINI WRC Team will again be competing on asphalt when it arrives in Strasbourg for its fourth event of 2011, Rally France-Alsace. The team is keen to capitalise on its third place in Germany for Dani Sordo (ES) and the tarmac performance shown by the MINI John Cooper Works WRC.

While the rest of the World Rally Championship competitors have been in Australia, the number 37 and 52 MINIs have been back in Banbury at the Prodrive headquarters. Since Rally Germany, both drivers have been getting valuable time behind the wheel with Kris Meeke (GB) attending the Rallyday at Castle Combe, and Dani Sordo shaking the car down at Prodrive's test track in Warwickshire as the team continues the MINI WRC's development. The team is also holding a one day pre-event test in France this weekend.

David Richards, Team Principal:

"Dani and Kris have proven that the MINI is very competitive on tarmac. Just like in Germany we will be going to France to show the performance of the car and aiming for both drivers to finish in strong positions. Whether we can repeat the podium in Trier remains to be seen, but certainly Dani likes the event. However, Kris is new to the stages, but I am confident he will soon be on the pace as he was in Germany."

Dani Sordo:

"The surface in France changes frequently, which makes the rally technically demanding. The route is very hilly, particularly in the forest sections. Here, the weather decides how you can drive. Last year it rained heavily, which made the surface very slippery. The Rallye de France is similar in many ways to Germany. Personally, I really like driving there, as you have to be both very focused and flexible with regard to the weather conditions. The recce plays a major role. The pace notes must be accurate, and the co-drivers instructions must be perfect."

Kris Meeke:

"I didn't start this rally in 2010, which practically makes this a completely new rally for me. However, I have completed a lot of testing in this region in the past, so I know roughly what to expect. The rally is a bit similar to its German counterpart, particularly the sections through the vineyards and on the gravel roads. It is technically very demanding and you cannot afford to lose concentration for a second, your pace notes must be very accurate."



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History and Background:

This rally is very much home for Sébastien Loeb (FR) with the Power Stage even going through the town he comes from. Its base in the Alsace region of France around the town of Strasbourg is relatively new, as this is only its second year there. Not surprisingly last year it was won by Loeb. However, before this the French round of the WRC has always been associated with the Mediterranean island of Corsica, where it was held from 1973 to 2008.

The event starts in Strasbourg Zénith at 07.00 on Friday, 30th September. This first day of action is over eight stages and 148.38 kilometres of competition. The competitors return to Strasbourg for service during the day, and then finish there in the evening with the first car due into the final parc fermé at 18.20. Day two sees an early start at 06.45 and a remote service at Colmar. On the schedule are a further nine stages with an almost identical competitive distance as day one at 148.39 kilometres. The first car is due into the final control for parc fermé at 18.36. On day three the start is even earlier at 06.20. The final of the day's six stages is the Power Stage and this is 4.20 kilometres around Haguenau. The final day's competition is over 51.36 kilometres, while the total for the whole event is 348.13 kilometres in the 1,296.08 kilometres that make up the total mileage.

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