

Fire ends Stuart's Corsican debut

Event: FIA Tour de Corse (World Rally Championship, round 10/13)

Date: September 29-October 2

Based: Bastia (Corsica, France)

Co-driving for: Mohamed Al Mutawaa (UAE)

Team: Abu Dhabi Racing

Car: Citroën DS 3 R3T

Background:

Stuart made his debut alongside rising UAE star Mohamed Al Mutawaa and his debut on the Tour de Corse this week. The pair tested in mainland France for one day on Friday September 23 before flying to Corsica for three days of route reconnaissance ahead of the rally itself.

A powersteering problem hampered progress through the opening day, with the Abu Dhabi Racing pair hoping to make time up on today's four stages. Unfortunately, the DS 3 R3T crashed off the road on the first test this morning, with driver Mohamed Al Mutawaa reporting a loss of brakes. The crash happened approximately 12 miles (20km) into SS5 (La Porta-Valle di Rostino 33 miles/53km). The car rolled down a bank and caught fire. Stuart and Mohamed were uninjured in the accident.

Stuart said:

"As is always the case with these things, the main thing – the only thing – is that Mohamed and I are out of the car and unhurt. The crash happened on quite a tight right hand corner. The straight leading into the bend was really bumpy and as soon as Mo touched the brakes, he said there was nothing, the car swapped ends and spun us into the bank.

"The car rode up and rolled on the bank, across the road and down into a ravine on the other side. I think we rolled three or four times before the car stopped up against a tree.

"We were both able to get out of the car unaided, but it looks like the hot exhaust touching the dry grass caused it to catch fire. We got our extinguisher and then took a couple more from the next two cars, but there was nothing we could do – the car went up incredibly quickly.

"The stage was stopped and emergency services sent straight in. It took the fire truck a while to get here and by the time they arrived, the car was gone.

"It's such a shame. Yesterday was tough for Mo with the powersteering, but we were really looking forward to today. These things can happen. It was a very, very dramatic end to the event – and fairly surreal standing absolutely helpless and watching the rally car burn. But, like I said, the main thing is we got out and we're both fine."

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