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News release

Perfect podium prepares Pryce for Portugal

Welsh rally star Osian Pryce is ready to take on the world following a stunning podium finish on Saturday's Rally North Wales – despite some of the worst and wettest conditions in the event's history.

The 22-year-old Citroen DS 3 R3T driver was competing on the Welsh event in preparation for next month's Rally of Portugal, where he begins his rookie year in WRC3.

Despite running in conditions which played firmly into the hands of his four-wheel drive rivals, Pryce and co-driver Dale Furniss stunned their opposition in the mid-Wales forests last weekend. They were only beaten by more powerful, four-wheel drive machinery – and only missed out on second place by two seconds.

In biblical terms, Pryce's effort was similar to that of David when he met Goliath all those years ago.

Pryce arrived at the start of the six-stage event on the back of a shortened test at Sweet Lamb last week. A transmission glitch halted the car after just a handful of runs around the stage.

Pryce's last rally outing came with a heroic effort on November's Wales Rally GB, where he ran second in WRC2 for much of his debut in world's rallying's second tier. His last outing in the DS 3 was on the Isle of Man in September; his last time in the car on gravel was the Scottish Rally almost 10 months ago.

Despite that lack of match practice in the DS 3, Pryce was on exceptional form in the horrendously wet and foggy conditions.

His time through the opening test was spoiled when he was limited to just 40mph for the final two miles after a turbo pipe came loose.

From then on, Pryce was flying, setting second fastest time through the Big Ray stage and third quickest in Dyfi Main which followed. The multiple British Rally Championship event winner was just seven seconds slower than the fastest four-wheel drive car in SS2 and an incredible five down in SS3.

Pryce spent the day working with Asquith Autosport – the team running the DS 3 this season – to fine-tune settings for his next event, the Rally of Portugal.

Much as he wanted to win, the best gauge of Pryce's true pace was against the next best DS 3 R3T... he won that battle by three minutes.

The Rally of Portugal represents the next big step in Osian's career as he steps up from domestic competition to take on the world in the WRC3 series.

Osian said: "There were some quality four-wheel drive cars on the entry list, so winning Rally North Wales was pretty much impossible. Looking at the onboard from stage one, we dropped 25 seconds when the pipe came off, so that cost us second place. Much as it would have been nice to win, the priority was to get back into the groove driving the DS 3 R3T. We drove a Ford Fiesta R5 on Rally GB and that's quite a different car to the Citroen.

"Even though we didn't have much time in the car at the pre-event test, it was enough for me to feel comfortable with it. And, as soon as the event itself started, it was like we'd never been away. The car ran perfectly throughout the rally and Dale and I were really happy with the way everything went. Except for the weather, which was unbelievable. The wipers couldn't clear the screen quick enough, it just didn't stop all day.

"I was really happy with the times through the Dyfi stage, given the amount of water around the place. We were within five seconds of fastest – and we'd have given at least two of those away on the startline. Once we were up and running in Dyfi, we were flat out everywhere.

"The DS 3 has undergone a significant evolution since we were last in it on the Isle of Man and it was great to have this chance to find out what the car can do with the improvements to the engine.

"It's now a case of counting the days until Portugal..."

Prior to the start of Rally of Portugal, Pryce will test the DS 3 in Wales (Walters Arena) on Friday (April 3) and on the Monday (May 18) close to Porto, Portugal.

Further details of both tests are available from Sandra Evans (media contact: +44 7887 693993 sandra@wordspr.com).

About Vodafone Rally of Portugal

Date: May 21-24

Base: Matosinhos

Stages: 16

Competitive distance: 218 miles (352 kilometres)

Total distance: 950 miles (1529 kilometres)

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