

11.11.14
News release

It's question time for Wales' world rally star Osian Pryce

How much does Osian Pryce know about Welsh birds? What will the score be against Fiji on Saturday? And why will there be a bear in the Ford Fiesta R5 with him and Dale Furniss when Wales Rally GB starts from Colwyn Bay on Thursday evening?

Osian, if you thought your first test in a four-wheel drive rally car was tough, wait until you get to the bottom of these...

Tell us something nobody knows about Osian Pryce.
So, we're starting with the easy one... er... I know, my first experience of four wheels and an engine came when I was three years old – but on a quad bike, not in a car.

Your favourite stage on Rally GB and why?
Gartheiniog. OK, I'm a bit biased – it's my home stage. But it's brilliant, it's got a bit of everything.

Your least favourite stage on Rally GB and why?
Brenig because it's just such a tricky stage with some Tarmac in it. I'll be steady away on that one!

Do you have any superstitions or pre-stage rituals?
I have a few, actually. I always carry a Welsh flag and a little bear in the car with me. I've got no idea why or how it started. Another one has been noticed by other people – I always close my eyes when I'm putting my crash helmet on. Maybe everybody does that. Do they?

Who's your hero?
It's got to be Colin McRae. Ever since I was two or three years old I have always wanted to be Colin McRae. I don't know when this feeling got so strong, but it always seemed to get stronger every time I watched him on a stage or watched another clip. He was the absolute rally hero.

Who has been/is your biggest rival?
Dan McKenna. We've had a great fight all year in the British Rally Championship.

What's a good night out for Osian Pryce?
It would have to be with the right people in the right place, somewhere with a good atmosphere. And maybe a bottle or two...

Which three people would come with you on the perfect night out?
My best friend Barry – he is a good night out! My co-driver Dale, who's also brilliant fun when we're out and, of course, Colin McRae.

Predict the score for Wales v Fiji on Saturday (November 15).

It'll be close, but Wales will win. 21-17.

How many miles of coastline does Wales have?

What? Loads! Er, hmm, hundreds and hundreds. I'll say 678 miles. And it's all lovely.
[Close, actually, not that close, Wales has 1680 miles of coastline].

Which is Wales' sixth biggest city?

Ha, you're not going to get me there – we've only got five cities. The next question's not to ask me to name them, is it?

Do you know the words to Hen Wlad Fy Nhadau?

Of course! Welsh is my first language – my whole family speak it. I love to hear the anthem as well, it means so much. I think it's best when you hear it out of context, it really gets you then.

What was the highest ever recorded temperature in Wales?

The sun always shines in Wales, so I reckon this must be in the mid-30s. At least.
[Correct. 35.2 degrees, recorded in Flintshire on August 2, 1990. You'd have been forgiven for not getting this one, Osian – you were minus three at the time.]

How many Red Kites are there reckoned to be living in Wales?

Oooh, that's a tough one. It's still quite something when you see one of these things. I don't think there are that many. A few hundred maybe?
[Not even close! There are 1000 pairs in Wales now, that's 2000 birds!]
Seriously? That's loads! Maybe they're not quite as rare as I thought...

Who will win Wales Rally GB?

Seb [Ogier] is going to be tough to beat, but I think Jari-Matti Latvala has a good chance. It would be great to see Elfyn [Evans] up there as well. There's a lot of pressure on him this week and a win is probably a bit unrealistic, but to see a fellow Welshman in the top five of our round of the World Rally Championship would be fantastic!

The Ford Fiesta R5: Osian's ride this week in detail

Engine: M-Sport developed 1.6 turbo, direct injection powerplant developing 270bhp. FIA regulated 32mm restrictor. Life Racing engine control unit and power management systems.

Bodyshell: M-Sport designed bespoke rollcage. R5 aero package.

Transmission: Sadev 5-speed sequential gearbox mated to Sadev front and rear differentials.

Suspension: front and rear MacPherson struts with Reiger external reservoir dampers, three-way adjustable. Front and rear anti roll-bar options.

Interior: FIA 8862 Standard Competition Seats with 6-point, HANS compatible harnesses. AP Racing fly-by-wire, fully adjustable pedal box. Life Racing fully functional drivers display controlled by a membrane switch panel.

Brakes: AP Racing forged 4-piston front and rear calipers. Vented discs 300 x 28mm. Hydraulic Handbrake.

Wheels: 7 x 15-inch.

The history lesson: Britain's biggest rally

Britain's round of the World Rally Championship is older than the World Rally Championship itself. Wales Rally GB – or the RAC Rally as it was known back then – first ran in 1932. The winner was decided from a series of driving tests and the competitive element was almost secondary to the social occasion.

All of that changed in 1960, when the first special stage was run up Monument Hill in Argyll, Scotland. From then on, the event took the forestry commission roads and has stayed there since. The World Rally Championship was formed in 1973 and the RAC Rally was a founding round and has remained on the calendar since.

With multi-national sponsors such as Lombard and Network Q, the event moved around the country regularly, starting from London some years and York or Harrogate on others. In 2000, the event moved to Cardiff after the Welsh Assembly Government agreed funding for the event. It has remained within Wales ever since.

Wales Rally GB moved north from the capital to Deeside last year, in an effort to draw in more spectators from major urban areas such as Liverpool, Birmingham and Manchester. The switch to a route drawing on the forests of mid and north Wales was seen as a great success. And this year's event is sold out to competitors for the first time since it moved to Wales 14 years ago.

About Osian Pryce

Date of birth: 24.02.93

Lives: Machynlleth

Co-driver: Dale Furniss

First rally: Rally Kurzeme (Latvia) August 2009 – 37th overall, eighth 2WD

British Rally Championship event wins: 4

British Rally Championship results: 2nd (2013/14), 3rd (2012)

World Rally Championship starts: 2

World Rally Championship class wins: 1

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About Wales Rally GB

Date: November 13-16

Base: Deeside

Stages: 23

Competitive distance: 189 miles (305 kilometres)

Total distance: 846 miles (1363 kilometres)

Website: walesrallygb.com

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