

13.11.14
News release

The world awaits Welsh star Osian Pryce

Thousands of Welsh fans cheered Osian Pryce over the Wales Rally GB start ramp in Colwyn Bay this evening, marking the start of the biggest week of the Machynlleth driver's life.

Pryce and his co-driver Dale Furniss have been waiting a long time to tackle their home round of the World Rally Championship in a front-running four-wheel drive car. And that moment has come.

Pryce, a four-time British Rally Championship event winner, will take on the fastest drivers in the world championship's feeder series, WRC2. While he's not registered for WRC2 points, he will get the chance to measure himself against the future stars of world rallying.

Pryce completed his final checks with the Ford Fiesta R5 at a shakedown stage in Clocaenog forest close to Ruthin this morning. This morning confirmed the settings Osian selected for the Fiesta at his test on Monday. From there, Osian completed media engagements before taking to the start ramp in Colwyn Bay.

More than 5000 fans turned out to watch Pryce and his fellow competitors start Britain's round of the world championship – all of them found their voice when the number 83 Ford rolled over the ramp.

Osian said: "This is it, then... Everything is done. Everything is ready. Driving up the A55 to the start in Colwyn Bay, I almost had to pinch myself: I'm a 21-year-old from the middle of nowhere, stuff like this doesn't normally happen to people like me! I've said all along that this is the biggest week of my life and it really is now, it's incredible.

"Going over the ramp in Eirias Park tonight in front of thousands of people – loads of them waving the Welsh flag was fantastic. Wales have put on some good performances on this Eirias pitch and I just hope I do the place justice when we get started tomorrow. Tonight was such a proud moment for me, my sponsors THORUtilities, Red Kite (Manufacturing), Swift Group, G&M Pryce, Morris Plant Hire, S. J. & S. Williams Ltd and DMACK and my family. Without all of those people, I wouldn't be here.

"Shakedown went really well this morning. We did two runs and I was happy – that was all we needed. We found a good feeling with the car in the test on Monday and I didn't want to use any more tyres than we had to today – the tyres we use today come out of our allocation for the rally itself.

"With all of the world championship regulars having been through the shakedown stage already, the surface was really representative of what we'll be

getting during the event. I have to say, the stages are absolutely fantastic and in great condition. Especially the one that's next door to my house!"

Tomorrow in detail: the longest day

Start: Deeside 0530

Four stages run twice

Remote service: Newtown 1103

Parc ferme (end of day): Deeside 1820

Longest stage: Hafren Sweet Lamb (23.55km/14.63 miles)

The crews leave Deeside and head for the southernmost stages on the event, tomorrow. The action takes place in the forests north of Llangurig and Machynlleth. The route back up to Deeside tomorrow afternoon actually takes the crews across the border into England to go around the town of Oswestry. This is the only time the event moves outside of Wales.

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 Argyl, 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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