

News release
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Belgium gets Osian busy, busy, busy

Welshman Osian Pryce will start the busiest period of his rally career to date with a first trip to Belgium's legendary Ypres Rally next week.

Ypres has been drafted into this year's British Rally Championship calendar and will mark Osian's first overseas competition since last year's Catalunya Rally when he celebrated winning the World Rally Championship-based Drive DMACK Fiesta Trophy.

Just hours after completing the fourth round of this year's British Rally Championship, Osian and co-driver Dale Furniss will fly to Warsaw for their first world event of the season, Rally Poland. After that, it's back to Britain for the Nicky Grist Stages and then, a fortnight later, it's Rally Finland time.

"We do three rallies back-to-back and four in six weeks," said Pryce. "It's going to be a seriously busy time for us, but I can't wait. Opportunities to be in a fantastic rally car like the Ford Fiesta R5 have to be grabbed and made the most of. That's what Dale and I will be doing.

"Naturally, the focus for now is on Belgium, but Dale and I have been working very closely with the whole team to make sure everything is right and everything is set for what's going to be a very big six weeks for the two of us."

Osian and Dale will switch to the DMACK World Rally Team for the two WRC outings in Poland and Finland. Those two rallies (which will be in a DMACK-branded Fiesta R5) are prize-drives for winning last year's Drive DMACK Fiesta Trophy.

"I've really put a lot of work into this section of the year," said Osian, who is lying second in this year's British Rally Championship standings. "Getting ready for one event takes a lot of time and planning, so to do this many in this short space of time means getting everything in order. Normally now I'd be thinking a lot about Poland and really going through the gears to get everything in order for that, but we've got Ypres first. We've had to be very regimented in our approach to get all the necessary prep done in the right order for these rallies, but we're there now."

Osian is excited about taking the Alphera/Hills Ford Fiesta R5 to one of the most atmospheric and best-supported rallies in Europe, but his lack of experience of Belgian rallying means a result is hard to predict.

“When you look at the route and see the way the roads are mapped out, you think it’s a fairly straightforward event,” he said, “but nothing could be further from the truth. There’s a real art to driving these roads and getting the most out of them. One of the keys is the approach in junctions, you can lose so much time here – particularly when those junctions are leading into a really fast part of the stage.”

And then there’s the weather.

“And then there really is the weather,” smiled Osian. “When it rains, genuinely, anything can happen. Because there’s quite a lot of corner cutting in some of the junctions, there’s a lot of mud and muck pulled into the road; we see this in places like Ireland, but from what folk have said, it’s quite different in Ypres. But you have to drive it to really experience it...”

“One thing is absolutely sure, it’s going to be a real experience. As well as driving new roads, it’s going to be fantastic to get some of that real Ypres atmosphere. Taking the BRC across to a place like this is a fantastic plan and I can’t wait to get out there and get cracking on our first asphalt round of the BRC this year.”

Ahead of his competitive debut in Ypres, Osian will test the Fiesta R5 at a test on Tuesday. The test road, just outside of Ypres, is wholly representative of the route, with sections of it having been included on the route for this legend of European rallying in previous seasons. Since Osian finished second on the Scottish Rally last time out, the Spencer Sport-run Fiesta has been treated to the Evo2 upgrade from M-Sport, which offers more power and enhanced performance.

Kenotek Ypres Rally – the detail

June 23-24

Based: Ypres

Service Ypres

Stages: 20

Total distance 552.11km (343.08 miles)

Competitive distance: 418.41km (260 miles)

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Itinerary

Friday June 23

Start Ypres 1615

SS1 Zonnebeke 9.90km (6.15 miles) 1659

SS2 Langemark 8.97km (5.57 miles) 1720

SS3 Dikkebus 1 12.53km (7.78 miles) 1748

SS4 Wijtschate 1 15km (9.32 miles) 1819

SS5 Hollebeke 1 8.57km (5.32 miles) 1845

Service Ypres 1909

SS6 Dikkebus 2 12.53km (7.78 miles) 2030

SS7 Wijtschate 2 15km (9.32 miles) 2101
SS8 Hollebeke 2 8.57km (5.32 miles) 2127
Service 2105
Parc Fermé 2305

Saturday June 24

SS9 Kemmelberg 1 15km (9.32 miles) 1056
SS10 Mesen 1 7.95km (4.94 miles) 1133
SS11 Zillebeke 1 14.39km (8.94 miles) 1153
Service Ypres 1221
SS12 Reninge 1 14.50km (9.01 miles) 1356
SS13 Watou 1 14.77km (9.17 miles) 1440
SS14 Westouter-Boeschepe 1 17.53km (10.89 miles) 1502
Service Ypres 1546
SS15 Kemmelberg 2 15km (9.32 miles) 1717
SS16 Mesen 2 7.95km (4.94 miles) 1754
SS17 Zillebeke 2 14.39km (8.94 miles) 1814
Service Ypres 1842
SS18 Reninge 2 14.50km (9.01 miles) 2017
SS19 Watou 2 14.77km (9.17 miles) 2101
SS20 Westouter-Boeschepe 2 17.53km (10.89 miles) 2123
Service 2208
Podium 2230

Osian's five Ypres facts

Only three British drivers have ever won the Ypres Rally: Tony Pond, Jimmy McRae and Kris Meeke.

Fries with that? Thank the Belgians, they invented fries. And they certainly invented fries with mayonnaise.

Two former world champions have won Ypres: Walter Rohrl and Miki Biasion.

Beer plays a big part in Belgian culture – which is just as well, given that there are more than 800 different varieties.

And, since 1999, there's somewhere to learn all about beer after the nation's first beer academy opened.

Belgium's other big export is chocolate, with more than 220,000 tonnes of the stuff produced annually.

Last time...

BRC round 3/7

RSAC Scottish Rally

May 19-20

Based: Dumfries

Storming drive to second through some fairly stormy conditions. Osian

collected his third successive BRC podium on the series' final trip north of the border.

This time...

BRC round 4/7

Kenotek Ypres Rally

June 23-24

Based: Ypres

One of European rallying's greatest asphalt rallies (not to mention the brilliant atmosphere). But if the weather changes, then roll the dice...

Next time...

WRC round 1/3

PZM Rally Poland

June 29-July 2

Based: Mikolajki

The second fastest round of the World Rally Championship, Rally Poland involves three days tearing up gravel tracks of the Polish Lake District.

The rest of 2017...

BRC round 5/7

Nicky Grist Stages

July 8-9

Based: Builth Wells

The BRC's only mixed surface event includes the best asphalt action on the fearsome Epynt military ranges together with forest stages which were once a regular feature of Britain's round of the World Rally Championship.

WRC round 2/3

Neste Rally Finland

July 27-30

Based: Jyväskylä

The fastest round of the World Rally Championship. You pull top gear on Friday morning and leave your car there until Sunday afternoon on a fast-forward journey through the forests of Finland.

BRC round 6/7

John Mulholland Motors Ulster Rally

August 18-19

Based: Londonderry/Derry

A mainstay of the British Rally Championship, this mid-summer asphalt spectacular brings some of the UK's best lanes – quite often in some of the wettest and trickiest conditions.

BRC round 7/7

138.com Rally Isle of Man

September 14-16

Based: Douglas

The Manx. If Markku Alen knows about Elibank, Ari Vatanen will never forget the Isle of Man. The world over, these stages are known, loved, loathed and respected. A brilliant way to end the BRC season.

WRC round 3/3

Dayinsure Wales Rally GB

October 26-29

Based: Deeside

The final European round of the WRC takes crews through the forests of mid and north Wales, passing Osian's front door along the way. Rain, sun, ice and even snow regularly feature to add to the challenge of one of the world's finest motorsport events.

Osian Pryce – date of birth: 24.02.93

2009 **Aged 16**, Osian heads to Latvia to contest the Latvian Rally Championship (drivers are allowed to compete from aged 15).

2010 Just days after passing his driving test, Osian starts his first season of competition in the UK, driving a Ford Fiesta ST. The **highlight** of 2010 is a **class win on his World Rally Championship debut** at Rally GB.

2011 Stays in the Fiesta for a season learning the ropes in the British Rally Championship, the pinnacle of the sport in the UK.

2012 Ends his first BRC season in a front-running Citroen DS3 R3T with **two podium finishes** and **third in the standings**.

2013 BRC championship runner-up after a **hat-trick of wins** in the second half of the season.

2014 Just misses out on BRC title after final-round thriller.

2015 Steps up to **Junior World Rally Championship** and **leads on his debut** (Rally Portugal) in the sport's premier feeder series. Finishes second on Rally Poland, having led until a mechanical problem late in the event.

2016 **Wins** the FIA World Rally Championship's **Drive DMACK Fiesta Trophy** with two event victories and three podiums from five starts.

2017 **Podium** on his BRC return and series debut in a Ford Fiesta R5 at the Border Counties Rally. **Dominates** Rally North Wales, winning every stage and then comes close to his first BRC win of the year finishing second on the Pirelli International Rally.

Ford Fiesta R5

Engine: 1600cc turbo, 32mm restrictor

Max power: 280bhp @ 6,200rpm

Transmission: Sadev five-speed sequential gearbox; Sadev front/rear

differential

Suspension: Adjustable Reiger dampers; MacPherson struts front/rear

Brakes: 300mm discs four-piston calipers; hydraulic handbrake

Wheels: OZ Racing 7x15-inch

Dimensions: length 3982mm; width 1695mm; height 1481mm; wheelbase 2490mm

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