

18.05.15
News release

Osian rides the ruts and spends a fortune in Portugal

Welshman Osian Pryce completed his Rally of Portugal pre-event test without any problems today.

Pryce and co-driver Dale Furniss relished the chance to catch an early glimpse of the style of roads they will be competing on later this week, when the Machynlleth pair make their debut in the FIA Junior WRC – world rallying's feeder formula.

The Autosport Technology-run Citroën DS 3 R3-Max ran perfectly during the test and, after just four runs, Pryce decided he was happy with the set-up.

"It was really useful to get a look at the roads," said Pryce. "I must admit, I was surprised at just how rough the stage got and how quickly the surface changed. We did four runs pretty much back-to-back and the road was in a terrible state."

While the day might not have netted the massive mileage of some pre-event sessions, the insight into northern Portuguese stages could well turn out to be vital.

"The road was quite sandy today and watching the deterioration has given us a good idea of how the stages – with the same surface – are going to change by the time we get there," said Osian. "As well as anything today, it's good to get back into the car and get some miles done before the recce; it just settles everything down nicely."

The one thing Osian hadn't banked on, quite literally, was the regularity with which his credit card would be making an appearance.

"It hasn't been out of a machine all day," he said, "there's been so much to pay for and then, just when you get on the road and settle down for a bit of a journey, it's tolls and credit card time again!"

Fiscal concerns will be set aside for the next two days as Osian and Dale head into the hills to drive through the nine of the individual stages (seven of which are run twice) on the recce.

"I'm really looking forward to the recce," said Osian. "It's going to be fascinating to see what the roads are like. There's so much rally history about this place, I can't wait to see it first hand – especially the jump and the hairpin on the Fafe stage."

The test in detail Osian's day today

Location: Fafe, Portugal
Miles/kilometres completed: 15 miles/24 km
Weather: Sunny 24 degrees
Stage nature: Twisty and technical
Stage condition: Smooth, then rough... then rougher still.

The Citroën DS 3 R3-Max Osian's ride this week in detail

Engine: EP6 CDT 1598cc turbo, direct injection developing 234bhp and 430Nm at 3000rpm.

Bodyshell: Reinforced body with welded, multi-point roll cage.

Transmission: Front-wheel drive with six-speed sequential gearbox, activated from steering wheel-mounted paddle. Differential is self-locking ZF.

Suspension: front MacPherson struts with BOS three-way adjustable dampers.

Numbers: Bore and stroke 77 x 85.8mm width 1715mm length 3948mm wheelbase 2465mm fuel tank capacity 67 litres weight 1230kg.

Brakes: Alcon forged 4-piston front calipers, 2-piston rears. Vented discs 330 x 34mm (front) 300 x 8mm (rear). Hydraulic handbrake.

Wheels: 6 x 15-inch.

Osian's five facts about Portugal

Portuguese people eat more fish per head of population than any other country in the world.

And they eat their fish at big tables. Portugal holds the record for the world's largest dining table, after 15,000 people sat down alongside each other at one sitting.

And that table was set on the world's longest bridge – the 10.5-mile Vasco de Gama bridge in Lisbon.

The world's largest firework was set off in Porto three years ago. The rocket weighed 13.4 kilogrammes!

And finally... if you want to read something other than this press release – you could do worse than head for Bertrand bookstore in the centre of Lisbon. First opened in 1732, it's now the world's oldest bookshop.

About the Junior WRC

Won by such rallying greats as Sebastien Loeb and Sebastien Ogier, the Junior WRC title remains the most sought after drivers' title outside of the World Rally Championship itself.

The series is open to drivers under the age of 28 and is fought out over some of the world's most demanding rallies. The diversity of events Osian will contest this year is incredible: he'll go from flying 50 metres at a time through the forests of Jyvaskyla on what's known as the Finnish Grand Prix (Rally Finland) to the agonisingly slow Rally of 10,000 Corners (Tour de Corse).

Crews score on six of seven rounds of the Junior WRC. Osian and Dale missed the opening round of the season on Monte Carlo and will, therefore count all six from the calendar listed below.

All Junior WRC crews will drive the identical Citroen DS 3 R3-Max, the latest evolution of Citroen Racing's super-successful 1600cc turbocharged, front-wheel drive rally car. And all the crews will run identical Michelin tyres on all six rallies.

Osian and Dale will also compete for the WRC 3 title, which is the FIA's support series for category R3 cars.

Osian's 2015 events

Rally of Portugal (May 21-24)

Moved north from the Algarve to the heartland of Portuguese rallying for this year. The roads around Porto haven't been used as the base for Portugal's round of the FIA World Rally Championship since 2001 – but it's on stages like Fafe that legends and heroes were made in this part of the world.

Rally Poland (July 2-5)

A super-quick gravel round, Poland was one of the most popular rallies of last year. The event will run wholly within Poland this time, after experimenting with a cross-border route in Lithuania last year. Run out of the Polish Lake District town of Mikolajki, the event is always one of the best attended by fans.

Rally Finland (July 30-August 2)

Rallying's Holy Grail. If a driver can't win the championship, a Finland win is the next best thing. Rallying's a way of life in this country, but especially in Jyvaskyla in the last week of July. The stages thread a stunning route between the trees and lakes, while the fans provide an amazing atmosphere on the WRC's fastest weekend of the season.

Tour de Corse (October 1-4)

Back in the championship for the first time since 2008, the French island provides one of the most challenging asphalt routes of the year. The cars will move between the beautiful towns of Corte, Bastia and Ajaccio as they tackle the toughest and twistiest stages of the year.

Rally of Spain (October 22-25)

The only mixed surface event of Osian's season. This rally starts in the heart of Barcelona, where a hugely popular superspecial stage sets the scene for an

intriguing gravel-asphalt event. The service park is based in the seaside town of Salou.

Wales Rally GB (November 12-15)

Based out of Deeside, Osian's home round just keeps on getting better and better. The organisers have further innovations planned for this year, but there's going to be nowhere better for Osian to bring his season-long fight to a close.

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: 3

World Rally Championship class wins: 1

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About Vodafone Rally of Portugal

Date: May 21-24

Base: Matosinhos, Porto

Stages: 16

Competitive distance: 218 miles (352 kilometres)

Total distance: 950 miles (1529 kilometres)

Website: www.rallydeportugal.pt

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