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News release

Victorious Pryce to star on rallying's biggest stage

It's rallying's equivalent of a summer tour to New Zealand – that's the size of the task facing Osian Pryce at next week's Neste Rally Finland.

Just three weeks after Rally Poland and securing the biggest result of his career, when he won two prize drives in the World Rally Championship-based Drive DMACK Fiesta Trophy, the 23-year-old is ready for the season's toughest test on Finland's world-famous gravel rollercoaster.

Formerly known as the 1,000 Lakes Rally (Finland has 187,888 lakes – as well as a lot of trees) and the *Jyväskylän Suurajot* (the Jyväskylä Grand Prix), Neste Rally Finland holds a special place in the hearts of rally fans around the world. This event in this place is regularly touted as rallying's spiritual home. It really is that good.

And that tricky. Winning on these roads requires speed, nerve, and a perfect set of pacenotes to describe what's happening on the far side of that blind crest you're approaching flat out in top gear.

Osian and co-driver Dale Furniss were supposed to compete in Finland last season, but were left disappointed when a lack of budget forced them out of the Scandinavian trip. Next week the dream comes true.

Osian said: "For anybody involved in this sport, Finland has always been such a special place. Like everybody, I have grown up watching footage of guys like Marcus Grönholm or Markku Alen driving roads with unpronounceable names like Ouninpohja or Mökkiperä and now I'm here and about to be doing the same thing – it's fantastic. It really is a dream."

Two things make Finland special: speed and the art of flight. Last time out in Poland, speeds were high in the Ford Fiesta R2T, but on the stages around Jyväskylä they'll be even higher. And then there's going ballistic; year after year cars defy gravity and commonsense as they fly for 50 metres at a time at well over 100mph.

It's no wonder a Finland win's a special, special thing.

A second win of the season would be perfect for Osian and Dale, but the Welshmen have to keep their eyes on an even bigger prize.

"Tricky as it is in a place like Finland, in more ways than one, I've got to keep my feet on the ground this week. The way the Drive DMACK Fiesta Trophy is organised, we have three chances to take a really big win in the year and

Finland is one of those opportunities. With another two 2017 events up for grabs this week, it's vital we drive with that in mind.

"Having said that, the pace in this championship is so quick, we're going to have to be flat-out from the start and, I'm sure, for the whole event to stay close to the front. That's what we're here for.

"Let's go Finland!"

- ends

Meet Osian...

Date of birth: 24.02.93

Lives: Machynlleth

Co-driver: Dale Furniss

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

Rally starts: 59

British Rally Championship event wins: 5*

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

World Rally Championship starts: 7

World Rally Championship class wins: 2

Website: osianpryce.com

* Including Osian's dominant National Rally Cup victory on this year's Mid Wales Stages

About Neste Rally Finland

July 28-July 31

Based: Jyväskylä

Surface: gravel

Stages: 24

Competitive distance: 333.99km (207.54 miles)

Total distance: 1370.66km (851.72 miles)

Website: www.nesterallyfinland.fi

Neste Rally Finland Itinerary

Thursday July 28

Start Jyväskylä Paviljonki 1842

SS1 Harju 1 2.27km (1.41 miles) 1900

Friday July 29

SS2 Mökkiperä 1 13.84km (8.60 miles) 0713

SS3 Halinen 6.75km (4.19 miles) 0746

SS4 Jukojärvi 1 21.25km (13.20 miles) 0902

SS5 Surkee 1 14.95km (9.28 miles) 1039

SS6 Horkka 1 15.10km (9.38 miles) 1132

Service Jyväskylä Paviljonki 1234

SS7 Äänekoski-Valtra 7.40km (4.59 miles) 1410

SS8 Mökkiperä 2 13.84km (8.60 miles) 1508

SS9 Jukojärvi 2 21.25km (13.20 miles) 1638
SS10 Surkee 2 14.95km (9.28 miles) 1815
SS11 Horkka 2 15.10km (9.38 miles) 1908
SS12 Harju 2 2.27km (1.41 miles) 2030
Service Jyväskylä Paviljonki 2050

Saturday July 30

SS13 Ouninpohja 1 33.0km (20.50 miles) 0808
SS14 Päijälä 1 23.50km (14.60 miles) 0911
SS15 Pihlajakoski 1 14.51km (9.01 miles) 1034
SS16 Saalahti 1 4.40km (2.73 miles) 1152
Service Jyväskylä Paviljonki 1242
SS17 Ouninpohja 2 33.0km (20.50 miles) 1448
SS18 Päijälä 2 23.50km (14.60 miles) 1551
SS19 Pihlajakoski 2 14.51km (9.01 miles) 1714
SS20 Saalahti 2 4.40km (2.73 miles) 1832
Service Jyväskylä Paviljonki 1922

Sunday July 31

SS21 Lempää 1 6.90km (4.28 miles) 0828
SS22 Oittila 1 10.20km (6.33 miles) 0921
SS23 Lempää 2 6.90km (4.28 miles) 1115
SS24 Oittila 2 10.20km (6.33 miles) 1308
Finish Jyväskylä Paviljonki 1413

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Now say hello to the Ford Fiesta R2T

Engine: 999cc turbo, 12-valve, three cylinders
Max power: 180bhp @ 6,200rpm
Max torque: 250Nm @ 4,000rpm
Transmission: Sadev five-speed sequential gearbox, plated limited-slip differential and uprated driveshafts
Suspension: Adjustable Reiger dampers, Eibach springs
Brakes: 285mm discs four-piston calipers (front gravel); 310mm discs four-piston calipers (front asphalt); 280mm discs two-piston calipers (rear); hydraulic handbrake
Wheels: OZ Racing 6x15-inch (gravel); 6.5x15-inch (asphalt)
Dimensions: length 3982mm; width 1695mm; height 1481mm; wheelbase 2490mm
Weight: 1030kg

Osian's guide to 2016

Osian and Dale will contest five rounds of the World Rally Championship in the Drive DMACK Fiesta Trophy. Here's the details and an Osian download on the big five.

Been and gone...

Rally Portugal

May 19-22

Based: Matosinhos

Surface: gravel

Osian outings: 2 (2015, retired – mechanical; 2016 1st in DDFT)

Result: **1st**

Stage wins: 4

Stages led: 1

Osian and Dale took a sensible approach to the first half of the Porto-based opener, but still remained in the top three throughout the event. Moved to the front on the final day and took the win by almost two minutes.

Rally Poland

June 30-July 3

Based: Mikolajki

Surface: gravel

Osian outings: 2 (2015, 2nd Junior WRC)

Result: 2nd

Stage wins: 8

Stages led: 4

Rarely has second place been celebrated in quite such a fashion. Osian's result secured him the first major victory of the World Rally Championship season so far. Leading the points race after the first two DDFT rounds, Osian and Dale are now confirmed as factory DMACK drivers for two WRC events in a Ford Fiesta R5 next season.

Up and coming...

Rally Finland

July 28-31

Based: Jyväskylä

Surface: gravel

Osian outings: 0

Osian says: "Talk to anybody involved in rallying and they'll talk about Finland. It's the spiritual home of our sport. OK, recently we've had a couple of French guys dominating the sport, but Finland's where it's at when it comes to the big heroes in the world championship. And you only have to take a look at the roads to see why some of the best drivers in the world come from here. The speed's high and the jumps are just incredible – we'll be flying through the air for 30 or 40 metres at more than 100mph this summer. Can't wait for take off!"

Rally Germany

August 18-21

Based: Trier

Surface: asphalt

Osian outings: 0

Osian says: "This is a rally of three parts: the vineyard stages, the military testing ground and the country stages. The vineyards are absolutely full of hairpins, winding their way up and down the Mosel valley; absolute precision on the handbrake is called for here. Baumholder is an area used by the army to test tanks, which means plenty of surface changes from good asphalt to really broken concrete; the big danger here is from hinkelsteins, these are massive lumps of rock at the side of the road used to keep tanks on the straight and narrow. And if they don't move for tanks, they're not about to move for our Ford Fiesta R2T!

"Finally, the country roads. We'll feel a bit more at home here, these are not too dissimilar to what we see in Ireland. And, running through the countryside, these stages are prone to the same kind of cow-related surface changes we see in Ireland..."

Rally of Spain

October 13-16

Based: Salou

Surface: gravel/asphalt

Osian outings: 0

Osian says: "Two rallies in one when we get to the final event in Catalunya. The first day is on the gravel, which looks to be fairly similar in places to Portugal, but then it's a weekend on the asphalt. The Tarmac stages are all really nice and now some of the most famous in the world. Generally, they're double-width roads which flow quite nicely and allow you to carry good speed.

"Like the four events before Spain, I can't wait to get there and try them out for myself!"

About the Drive DMACK Fiesta Trophy

The brainchild of M-Sport World Rally Team principal Malcolm Wilson and DMACK managing director Dick Cormack, the DDFT takes the best young drivers from around the world and pitches them into a five-round fight for the biggest prize south of the World Rally Championship itself.

There's a season in a Ford Fiesta R5 car at rallying's second tier – WRC2 – on offer to the winner after five rounds. The structure of DDFT has changed slightly this season, with rallies being paired (Portugal and Poland; Poland and Finland; Germany and Spain) and the crew gathering the most points from each of those two rallies will win two rallies in the R5 car next season.

Winning a full WRC2 season of 2017 competition in an M-Sport Fiesta R5 will require consistent speed from Osian and Dale this year.

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