

News release
24.06.17

Osian's moment has arrived, the world awaits...

Welsh rally star Osian Pryce will start the most important event of his career when he joins the Drive DMACK World Rally Team for next week's Rally Poland.

Osian won the Drive DMACK Fiesta Trophy (DDFT) – the most valuable prize in world rallying – last season and starts the first of two prize drives in Poland. The second comes at the iconic Rally Finland next month. On both occasions, Osian will drive a Ford Fiesta R5 built and run by M-Sport, the British-based squad currently leading both the drivers' (with Frenchman Sébastien Ogier) and manufacturers' World Rally Championship standings.

Understandably, Osian can't wait to get to what will be his first world championship outing of the season so far.

"These two rallies in Poland and Finland were what last year was all about," said Osian. "We fought so hard to win the DDFT title and now we've got this golden opportunity to drive a car built and run by the best team in the world. To say I'm excited about Poland is a massive understatement!"

Osian has built his year around Poland and Finland, tailoring his British Rally Championship effort to put him in the best place possible when it came to his two events with Drive DMACK.

"Pre-season my co-driver Dale [Furniss] and I worked really hard on the programme we had through this season," said Osian. "We've been very fortunate to get backing from Hills Ford and Alphera Finance for the British Rally Championship and that's allowed us to compete regularly in a Ford Fiesta R5 – and seat time in one of these cars is so important when we get to Poland.

"We'll be competing against the fastest up-and-coming rally drivers in the world in the WRC2 section of Rally Poland. Basically, the world champions of tomorrow are all competing in our class at that rally. The rest of the drivers will have a slight advantage because they've been competing at this level since the start of the season and Dale and I will be jumping in and trying to steal their spotlight for the next two rounds. But, like I said, the big thing is that I've got good experience with the Fiesta R5."

And good experience of Rally Poland: the Welshmen have competed on the Mikolajki-based event for the last two years – and starred in the Polish lake district on both occasions.

"We certainly do have good experience of Poland," said Osian. "We were here as part of the Junior WRC in 2015 and obviously as part of DDFT last year. This is an event I really enjoy. The roads are so fast, it's an incredible rush – quite literally – to be tearing down gravel roads through fields and between the hedges at 120mph. I love it."

And he's very good at it. Osian dominated the JWRC event two years ago, leading for nine of the 18 stages run and setting more fastest times than anybody else (10/18). Only a late electrical glitch on his DS 3 R3T cost him victory.

Last season there were more fastest times in the DDFT category and more time leading the class, before the Welshmen finished second.

"We've come so close to winning the class for the last two years," said Osian, "it would be a real dream come true to put that right next week!"

Before he and Dale fly to Warsaw and take the three-hour drive north to Mikolajki, they have the small matter of the Ypres Rally to content with. The Belgian round of the British Rally Championship started yesterday (Friday June 23) and finishes today (Saturday June 24).

About Rally Poland

Thursday June 29 – Sunday July 2

Based: Mikolajki

Surface: gravel

Stages: 23

Competitive distance: 326.64km (202.97 miles)

Total distance: 1422.63km (884.02 miles)

Website: www.rajdpolski.pl

Itinerary

Thursday June 29

Ceremonial Start, Mikolajki Main Square 1600

SS1 Super Special Stage Mikolajki Arena (2.50km) 1.55 miles 1908

Friday June 30

SS2 Chimielewo 1 6.52km (4.05 miles) 0715

SS3 Wieliczki 1 15.96km (9.91 miles) 0900

SS4 Swietajno 1 19.60km (12.17 miles) 0955

SS5 Stare Juchy 1 13.50km (8.38 miles) 1040

Service Mikolajki 1225

SS6 Chimielewo 2 6.52km (4.05 miles) 1345

SS7 Wieliczki 2 15.96km (9.91 miles) 1530

SS8 Swietajno 2 19.60km (12.17 miles) 1625

SS9 Stare Juchy 2 13.50km (8.38 miles) 1710

SS10 Super Special Stage Mikolajki Arena (2.50km) 1.55 miles 1908

Service Mikolajki 1928

Saturday July 1

SS11 Baranowo 1 15.55km (9.66 miles) 0808

SS12 Pozezdrze 1 24.28km (15.08 miles) 0920

SS13 Goldap 1 14.75km (9.16 miles) 1045

SS14 Kruklanki 1 19.58km 12.16 miles 1135

Service Mikolajki 1257

SS15 Baranowo 2 15.55km (9.66 miles) 1408

SS16 Pozezdrze 2 24.28km (15.08 miles) 1520

SS17 Goldap 2 14.75km (9.16 miles) 1645

SS18 Kruklanki 2 19.58km 12.16 miles 1735

SS19 Super Special Stage Mikolajki Arena (2.50km) 1.55 miles 1930

Service 1950

Sunday July 2

SS20 Orzysz 1 11.15km (6.92 miles) 0810

SS21 Paprotki 1 18.68km (11.60 miles) 0908

SS22 Orzysz 2 11.15km (6.92 miles) 1045

SS23 Paprotki 2 18.68km (11.60 miles) 1218

Finish Podium 1430

Osian's five Polish facts

Poland is officially the strongest place in the world. How do we know? Polish chaps have won the World's Strongest Man title more than any other nation (five). If you have any issues with this fact, we'd direct you to martial arts expert Mariusz Pudzianowski. Known as the 'Dominator,' our friend Mariusz won all five of Poland's titles.

Catholicism is so popular in Poland, the nation has a television channel dedicated to the religion.

If you're eating a banana in Poland, be careful. The fruit is peeled from the blossom end rather than the stem end. For those who don't know their blossom from their stem, the stem is the sticky-out bit at the top of the banana. That said, if you're in Poland, the top will be the bottom...

For a country with 9300 lakes, you might be surprised to discover it also has a desert. At 32-square kilometres (12 square miles) Bledow Desert is central Europe's largest accumulation of sand.

Ketchup is one of the most popular pizza toppings in Poland.

Happening, er, now...

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...

A full review of Osian's Ypres Rally will be available on June 25

This 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.

Next time...

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.

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.

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: 68

British Rally Championship event wins: 5*

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

World Rally Championship starts: 11

World Rally Championship class wins: 3

* Including Osian's dominant National Rally Cup victory on the Mid Wales Stages in 2016

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

Rally Poland media contact:

Andrzej Borowczyk

T: + 48 721 527 453

E: a.borowczyk@rallypoland.pl

Osian Pryce media office:

Sandra Evans

Sandra@wordspr.com

(+44) 7887 693993