

24.05.15
News release

Osian dominates final day of Rally of Portugal

Welsh rally star Osian Pryce ended the Rally of Portugal the same way he started it today: fastest.

The 22-year-old from Machynlleth starred on his Junior WRC debut, leading the event at the start and setting an astonishing and unbeatable pace through the final day today.

Osian's hopes of a debut win at Junior WRC level were dashed by a series of problems aboard his Pryce's THORUtilities and G&M Pryce-backed Citroën from Friday afternoon and through Saturday. Those issues kept him and co-driver Dale Furniss off the podium, but nothing could stop the pair charging through Sunday to set a blistering pace – setting the fastest Junior WRC time on each stage run.

The opening stage of the day – the legendary Fafe test – was cancelled after an earlier competitor crashed, but it was the time in the following 20-mile Vieira do Minho which really caught the imagination of the watching world.

Osian was 37.9 seconds faster than anybody else, a gap almost unheard of in the close-nature of one-make rallying where everybody is driving identical cars.

Osian was almost two seconds per mile faster than Junior WRC winner Quentin Gilbert.

The crews returned to Fafe for the finale and Osian and Dale were fastest again, thundering through one of the world's most famous stretches of rally road quicker than any of their Junior rivals.

Osian said: "What a day! Fastest time on Fafe is a fantastic way to end our first ever Junior WRC round. It was quite frustrating not to get a run through Fafe this morning, but the middle stage of the loop was the one where we really wanted to try and make a bit of a mark and put into practice what I feel I've learned on this event.

"One of the key elements to competing at this level is the ability to drive at a sensible pace which is quick enough – but just quick enough. It's about winning as slowly as you can. I was quite cautious through the stage, it's such a long one and, after the problems we had yesterday, Dale and I didn't fancy standing and waiting at the side of the road for the tow truck!

"We had a clean run and I thought the time might be quite good, but when Dale told me we were faster than Quentin [Gilbert, Junior WRC winner] I was pretty surprised. And pleased, of course!

"I have learned a huge amount on this event – more than I ever thought I would have done. It's been amazing, fantastic, brilliant, disappointing, really disappointing and finally, absolutely mega! I can't wait for Poland now."

In a final insult, Osian was robbed of a place on the overall classification after his DS 3 R3-Max stopped on the run in to the finish.

He added: "That kind of sums up the event! Obviously it's very disappointing not to get to the finish, but what's important is the speed we have shown today and, like I say, what we've learned across the event."

Today in numbers: Osian did what, when in his class?

SS14: Stage cancelled

SS15: 1st fastest *quickest Junior WRC time by more than half a minute*

SS16: 1st fastest *another fastest Junior WRC time for Osian*

Next time Lakeland-bound

Osian and Dale's next event is Rally Poland (July 2-5). The Mikolajki-based event involves a high-speed run through the Polish Lake District along the region's beautiful forest roads. The weather and road surface are always key factors in this event; the stages are soft and sandy and often cut up when the going gets wet.

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.

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.

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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