

News release  
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### Osian tops the table after crucial away game

Welsh rally star Osian Pryce leads the British Rally Championship after a quick, consistent and sure-footed debut podium at the Ypres Rally, one of Europe's most notoriously tricky events.

Ahead of the start of the Belgian classic, Osian admitted the season's first all-asphalt encounter was the rally he was looking forward to least, having no experience or knowledge of what remains a hugely specialist event where success first time out is almost unheard of.

To make matters worse, Ypres was the first asphalt event for Osian in a four-wheel drive car. It was for that reason that he and co-driver Dale Furniss took a measured approach as they tried to dial the Alphera/Hills Ford Fiesta R5 into the specific requirements of the Belgian asphalt. Once they were more comfortable, they began a charge which would end with them at the top of the British Rally Championship standings.

"I knew this was going to be a tough rally," said Osian, "but I think I might have underestimated how tough. Never having competed in a car like this on Tarmac, it was a heck of an ask to come here and drive it for the first time. People told me Ypres was tricky and they're not wrong!

"The biggest thing to try to understand was the way the grip changed. You would go through one corner with really good grip where you could push on and lean on the car and then get to the next corner and find there was absolutely nothing; it was like driving on ice. Maybe this was because the temperature was a bit higher on Friday's first loop, I don't know, but it was really difficult."

To make matters worse, Osian couldn't find much comfort from the car, either.

"We changed the set-up a lot and, to be honest, we were going around in circles for the first half of the event," he said.

Then it clicked.

"We found a set-up which worked for us and everything started to make much more sense then," he said. "In the last two loops, I was really pleased with the progress we made with the car and the result this had on the times."

But the most pleasing thing was the move from P2 to P1 in the championship race.

"To come away from a tough weekend like this with the championship lead is a real boost," said Osian. "There were lots of incidents and a few problems for our rivals and we know we've benefitted from those, but we had a straightforward plan for this one: bring it home. The one thing people talked about was the attrition rate in Ypres and that was always in the back of my mind. We weren't favourites to win this one, so the most important thing was to keep the car on the road and bag as many points as possible. And that's just what we've done. If you like, Ypres was the bogey rally for Dale and I, so we're delighted to be heading home on top of the table."

Except they're not heading home. Flying out of Belgium, the Welsh stars were heading north-east, bound for Warsaw and the World Rally Championship.

Just five days after moving into the lead of the British Rally Championship, Osian and Dale take their bow in the DMACK World Rally Team at Rally Poland. They will drive a DMACK Ford Fiesta R5 as part of their prize for winning the World Rally Championship-based Drive DMACK Fiesta Trophy last season.

"It's always nice to start a rally quickly after you've just finished the last one," said Osian, "you feel the speed's there from the start and everything feels quite normal. It'll be fantastic to join the DMACK team for Poland, an event where I've finished second [in class] for the last two years – be nice to go one better this time around."

After Poland, Osian and Dale will be heading home. And home for their home British Rally Championship fixture, the Builth Wells-based Nicky Grist Stages (July 8/9).

### **This time...**

Ypres Rally

Result: 3<sup>rd</sup>

BRC position: 1<sup>st</sup>

Based: Ypres

Service Ypres

Stages: 20

Total distance 343 miles

Competitive distance: 260 miles

### **Weather:**

Sunny Friday, overcast Saturday and dry both days.

### **Next time (this week)...**

*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.*

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. Continues his run of podiums with second in Scotland before moving into the **championship lead** on his first ever visit to Ypres.

### **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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