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News release

Osian chases Junior WRC Polish polish this week

Junior World Rally Championship pace-setting Welshman Osian Pryce is in Poland to finish a job he started in Portugal last month – namely, taking his first ever JWRC class win.

The 22-year-old set fastest stage times on his debut in the World Rally Championship's feeder series, but missed out on a classified finish after a Rally of Portugal plagued with problems. Pryce and co-driver Dale Furniss will be putting all of those issues behind them as they go flat-out for a first win on this week's Rally Poland.

The pair arrived in Poland today (Monday) and went straight into their pre-event test close to the host town of Mikołajki.

With the engine on his own DS 3 R3-Max back at Citroën Racing in Versailles, Osian is using Autosport Technology's car in Poland this week. And he and Dale settled into the new car immediately. It was different, but the same.

"The team had put my steering wheel and seat and my settings into their car," said Osian, "so once we were out on the stage, the feeling was exactly the same."

And that feeling was very, very fast.

"The test stage had a good stretch of quick stuff in it," said Osian. "It was nice to get up into the top half of the gearbox and stay there for a while. I haven't competed here in Poland before, but from looking at the videos online and the coverage of last year's event, I think we're in for a fast rally."

Most of the stages have changed since 2014, but the nature of the roads here remains the same: blindingly quick.

"We don't have too many really quick stages back home in Britain," said Pryce, "so it will be something quite new for us to be spending so long in sixth gear – but a serious amount of speed is never a bad thing for a rally driver! I can't wait to be getting started, to be honest."

While he might not have much recent relevant experience, Osian says his time competing in Latvian rallies as a 16-year-old will come to play this week.

"There were some really fast roads in Latvia," he said, "and we always seemed to go well on those. From what I've seen so far, the look and feel of the stages and the surrounding area is a lot like Latvia. The welcome we've

had here in Poland has been great and already there are a lot of people out watching. I think we're in for a really special event this week.

"I want to get experience of this event. I want to get through every stage, we spent a lot of time sitting at the side of the road in Portugal and that was so frustrating – especially when we were setting good times and running well when the car was working. Before the start of my first Junior WRC event, there was this nagging question of where my speed would be compared with the other guys. I feel we've shown we can mix it with them, but there's a real feeling between Dale and I that we want to get out there and finish the job now."

Osian and Dale will begin their pre-event reconnaissance tomorrow (Tuesday), completing two runs at limited speed (50mph/80kph) before the competition starts on Friday.

The test in detail Osian's day today

Location: Mikołajki, Poland

Miles/kilometres completed: 10.5 miles/17 km

Weather: Overcast 15 degrees

Stage nature: Fast then narrow and technical

Stage condition: Loose and sandy.

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 Poland

Last time we brought you the world's oldest bookshop in Portugal, this time we can reveal the oldest restaurant in Europe... the Piwnica Swidnicka in Wrocław. It's been open and serving since 1275.

More than 800 bison (Europe's heaviest animal) live in the 380,000-acre Białowieża Primeval Forest, Poland's last ancient woods.

Mariusz Pudzianowski or 'Pudzian' to his friends has won the title of World's Strongest Man more times than anybody (five). The muscle-bound Pole can deadlift 415kg, eliminating the need for an engine hoist or trolley jack.

Poland has 9,300 lakes. And one desert. The Błędów Desert, which lies in the Silesian Highlands in the south of the country, is Europe's largest inland accumulation of sand, covering 12 square miles (32 square kilometres).

The average Pole drinks 92 litres of beer each year. Only Germans and folk living in the Czech Republic are more thirsty for ale.

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 Jyvaszkyla 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: 4

World Rally Championship class wins: 1

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Osian's 2015 events

Rally of Portugal (May 21-24)

The combination of punctures, trouble with the dampers, auxiliary belt and electrical issues, powersteering failure and brake problems meant Osian and Dale didn't finish. In fact, they only managed eight clean stages over the three days. But, of those eight, they were fastest on three and in the top three times on another three. Not bad for their first time in Portugal.

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 Lotos Rally Poland

Date: July 2-5
Base: Mikołajki
Stages: 19

Competitive distance: 194 miles (313 kilometres)

Total distance: 740 miles (1192 kilometres)

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