

30.06.16
News release

Osian chases the Polish zloty...

Welshman Osian Pryce is chasing more World Rally Championship glory this week – his Rally Poland attack got under way in Mikolajki, north of Warsaw tonight.

Osian and co-driver Dale Furniss dominated the Junior World Rally Championship round in Poland last year and a similar effort in the Drive DMACK Fiesta Trophy (DDFT) this week would be enough to land them the result of a lifetime: two factory drives in next year's WRC2 series for the world championship-winning M-Sport team.

Osian won the opening DDFT round of the 2016 season in Portugal (May 19-22) with a fabulously controlled drive. He's after more of the same this week.

The last time Osian saw his Ford Fiesta R2T in Portugal, he was spraying it with champagne in celebration of his DDFT debut win. M-Sport has since wiped it clean and prepared it for round two.

"We tested the car today (Thursday)," said Osian. "It was perfect, like getting into a new car again. We did a couple of runs, just to get ourselves back into the groove. It was fantastic. Tonight, it was just a really short spectator stage, we took it steady and we're only a second or so off the lead. The real action starts in the morning."

Osian drove M-Sport's own Fiesta at last week's prestigious Goodwood Festival of Speed, which offered him more valuable seat time in a car he's still getting accustomed to. But the Sussex Downs in Britain's far south are a long way from Poland's super-quick stages.

"Extra time driving on a stage is always useful," said Osian, "but as soon as Dale and I started our pre-event recce on Tuesday, we knew we were in another world. The roads here are so fast. The first one tomorrow (Friday) morning is going to be an incredible wake-up call.

"We'll be out of bed and flying the car at 100mph a couple of hours later. It's going to be a very quick day. The focus for me is to do what I did last time. No dramas, no heroics, but at the same time we've got to keep up with the pace – the other boys will be pushing hard here."

Back-to-back DDFT wins would bag Osian two World Rally Championship outings in an M-Sport Ford Fiesta R5 next season.

"That's what this season's all about," he said. "We've all got our eyes on that prize. The way the championship is staggered, with drives awarded after two

events, the first winners will come on Sunday. That's what makes this week such a big deal."

Osian's five favourite Polish facts:

While Osian and Dale are whizzing through the Polish countryside, they should keep their eyes peeled for some fairly exciting wildlife (as well as the corners, jumps and trees)... Did you know Lynx, Grey Wolves and European Bison are all native in Poland? Does that count as a fact about Poland? I think so.

It's no surprise Osian and Dale are feeling at home in Poland this week – the nation holds the record for the most victories in the world's strongest man competition. Nine champions have come from Poland. Mariusz Pudzianowski is Poland's most recent champ and he's taken the title five times. Mariusz says he can dead lift 415 kilos (the same as picking up Osian, Dale, three of their friends and a bag of sugar). We believe him.

Osian and Dale will be kissing the – female – hand that feeds them this week. In Poland it's still considered to be the height of courtesy for a man to kiss the hand of a lady when they meet. Or, indeed, when they're fed.

If Osian or Dale lived in Poland and owned a dog, it would be most likely to be called Burek. That's the most popular name for Polish man's best friend.

Osian and Dale's hotel looks out on to Poland's largest lake: Sniardwy, which has a surface area of 43.9 square miles. It's 75 feet deep and has eight islands. It's also a little bit bigger than the boys' largest llyn back home in Wales. Llyn Tegid (Bala Lake) might only be three square miles in surface area and have no islands, but it is almost twice as deep at 137 feet.

Tomorrow is:

Friday July 1

Osian's day starts: 0730

Osian's day finishes: 2120

Number of stages: nine

Competitive distance: 75.76 miles (121.92km)

Total distance: 378.09 miles (608.45km)

Longest stage: SS4/8 Swietajno 12.94 miles (21.14km)

Shortest stage: SS10 Super Special Mikolajki 1.55 miles (2.50km)

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: 57

British Rally Championship event wins: 5*

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

World Rally Championship starts: 6
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 Rally Poland

June 30-July 3
Based: Mikolajki
Surface: gravel
Stages: 21
Competitive distance: 190.21 miles (306.10km)
Total distance: 778.79 miles (1253.29km)
Website: www.rajdpolski.pl

Rally Poland itinerary

Thursday June 30
Start Mikolajki main square 1600
SS1 Mikolajki Arena 1 2.50km (1.55 miles) 1908

Friday July 1
SS2 Chmielewo 1 6.52km (4.05 miles) 0715
SS3 Wieliczki 1 17.30km (10.75 miles) 0900
SS4 Swietajno 1 21.14km (13.13 miles) 1010
SS5 Stare Juchy 1 13.50km (8.38 miles) 1055
Service Mikolajki 1240
SS6 Chmielewo 2 6.52km (4.05 miles) 1355
SS7 Wieliczki 2 17.30km (10.75 miles) 1540
SS8 Swietajno 2 21.14km (13.13 miles) 1650
SS9 Stare Juchy 2 13.50km (8.38 miles) 1735
SS10 Mikolajki Arena 2 2.50km (1.55 miles) 1928
Service Mikolajki 1948

Saturday July 2
SS11 Goldap 1 14.75km (9.16 miles) 0955
SS12 Stanczyki 1 25.27km (15.70 miles) 1125
SS13 Babki 1 21.02km (13.06 miles) 1215
Remote tyre zone Goldap 1315
SS14 Stanczyki 2 25.27km (15.70 miles) 1450
SS15 Babki 2 21.02km (13.06 miles) 1540
SS16 Goldap 2 14.75km (9.16 miles) 1650
SS17 Mikolajki Arena 3 2.50km (1.55 miles) 1908
Service Mikolajki 1928

Sunday July 3
SS18 Baranowo 1 21.25km (13.20 miles) 0820
SS19 Sady 1 8.55km (5.31 miles) 0908
Service Mikolajki 0935

SS20 Baranowo 2 21.25km (13.20 miles) 1050
SS21 Sady 2 8.55km (5.31 miles) 1208
Finish Mikolajki main square 1400

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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

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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