

19.05.16
News release

Osian's world tour is underway

Welsh rally star Osian Pryce's World Rally Championship challenge began in Portugal tonight (Thursday).

The Machynlleth driver, contesting this year's Drive DMACK Fiesta Trophy (DDFT) element of the world championship, was third fastest at tonight's opening two-mile Rally of Portugal stage.

Pryce and his fellow DDFT competitors contested the single test at Lousada, 30 miles inland from the rally's base near Porto, this evening. The real action starts tomorrow morning, when Osian and co-driver Dale Furniss tackle 80 competitive miles, flat-out over some of Portugal's fastest gravel roads.

"I've been waiting for this moment for a very long time," said Osian. "We haven't competed at this level for almost a year.

"Tonight's stage was really just a loosener for what's to come tomorrow and over the weekend. We had no problems, just a sensible drive to get us in the groove for the gravel.

"This really is the start of something special for me. Just being here in Portugal among the world's best rally drivers is incredible. But, just as Sebastien Ogier's got a job to do at the front of the field, so Dale and I have a job to do in our category: we're here to challenge for victory.

"This is going to be a tough event, there's no doubt about that, but that's why it's called the World Rally Championship. This is the pinnacle of world rallying and we're part of it.

"We've had the odd issue on the run up to the start, but now we're 100 per cent focused on the task in hand. We did a final shakedown test earlier today and that went well. Now, we're just ready to get on with it..."

Rally legend Ari Vatanen was on hand at today's official DDFT launch (his son Max is one of Osian's rivals). The 1981 World Rally Champion was full of useful tips for Osian and Dale, while the Welshmen were full of admiration for the Finn.

"In our world, names don't really come much bigger than Ari," said Osian. "He remains one of the world's most talented and charismatic drivers. It was an honour to have him with us today. He's a real inspiration when we're starting out on our world championship road."

Tomorrow's action will take Osian and Dale north out of Porto close to the Spanish border, where they will tackle two loops of three stages before heading back to Portugal's second largest city for two spectator-pleasing runs around the Porto superspecial.

Osian's five favourite Portuguese facts:

Surfing is big in Portugal. Like BIG! In 2011, Hawaiian Garrett McNamara broke the world record by surfing the first ever 100-foot wave. That was done just south of Porto at a place called Nazare. Osian was hoping to break that record before his first WRC round of the season, but when he and his board arrived at Praia do Norte, there wasn't a single 105-footer to be found. Typical.

Given the prevalence of 100-footers off the coast of Porto (apart from when Osian's around), it's no surprise the world's first wave farm was installed three miles out to sea here. Three Pelamis Wave Energy Converters were installed near Povoia de Varzim in September 2008. The anticipated peak capacity of 2.25 MW was enough to power 1,500 homes. Or it would have been if a bearing problem hadn't forced its closure after three months.
#wavegoodbye

Fishing and eating fish is enormously popular in Portugal. The average Azorean consumes 76 kilos of fish annually. Average for the rest of the world? Sixteen kilos. Those lovely Portuguese island folk are literally eating their own body weight in fish.

Porto is the only European city with six bridges. One of them, the Maria Pia Bridge, was designed by Gustave Eiffel, just before he switched his attention to Paris's lack of a tower.

The French connection doesn't end there. The 'Frenchy' is a typical Porto dish. It's a sandwich with beef, ham and sausage, soaked in a tomato-beer marinade before being covered in cheese and surrounded by chips. Osian and Dale have not been tempted by a 'Frenchy'.

Tomorrow is:

Friday May 20

Osian's day starts: 1010

Osian's day finishes: 2220

Number of stages: eight

Competitive distance: 82.04 miles (132.04km)

Total distance: 376.6 miles (605.8km)

Longest stage: SS2/5 Ponte de Lima 17.05 miles (27.44km)

Shortest stage: SS8/9 Porto Street Stage 1.14 miles (1.85km)

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: 5
 World Rally Championship class wins: 1
 Website: osianpryce.com
 * Including Osian's dominant National Rally Cup victory on this year's Mid Wales Stages

About Rally of Portugal

May 19-22
 Based: Matosinhos
 Surface: gravel
 Stages: 19
 Competitive distance: 368km (228.67 miles)
 Total distance: 1683.90km (1046.37 miles)
 Website: www.rallydeportugal.pt

Rally of Portugal itinerary

Thursday May 19

Start Guimarães		1810
SS1 Lousada	3.36km (2.08 miles)	1901

Friday May 20

SS2 Ponte de Lima 1	27.44km (17.05 miles)	0930
SS3 Caminha 1	18.03km (11.20 miles)	1014
SS4 Viana do Castelo 1	18.70km (11.62 miles)	1103
Service Exponor		1330
SS5 Ponte de Lima 2	27.44km (17.05 miles)	1539
SS6 Caminha 2	18.03km (11.20 miles)	1623
SS7 Viana do Castelo 2	18.70km (11.62 miles)	1712
SS8 Porto Street Stage 1	1.85km (1.14 miles)	1903
SS9 Porto Street Stage 2	1.85km (1.14 miles)	1918
Service Exponor		1950

Saturday May 21

SS10 Baião 1	18.66km (11.59 miles)	0942
SS11 Marão 1	26.31km (16.34 miles)	1024
SS12 Amarante 1	37.67km (23.40 miles)	1152
Service Exponor		1325
SS13 Baião 2	18.66km (11.59 miles)	1532
SS14 Marão 2	26.31km (16.34 miles)	1614
SS15 Amarante 2	37.67km (23.40 miles)	1742
Service Exponor		1915

Sunday May 22

SS16 Vieira do Minho 1	22.47km (13.96 miles)	0704
SS17 Fafe 1	11.19km (6.95 miles)	0908
SS18 Vieira do Minho 2	22.47km (13.96 miles)	1004
SS19 Fafe 2	11.19km (6.95 miles)	1208
Finish Matosinhos		

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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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