

22.05.16
News release

Osian rides the winning wave in Portugal

Osian Pryce scored a brilliant debut win in the World Rally Championship-based Drive DMACK Fiesta Trophy this afternoon – the Welshman finished Rally of Portugal with almost two minutes ahead of his nearest rival.

Just down the road from Rally of Portugal's Porto base is the beach where the first ever 100-foot Atlantic surf was ridden a few years ago; that's nothing compared with the wave Osian and co-driver Dale Furniss are riding tonight.

They are category winners in the FIA World Rally Championship for the first time.

And they'll be back at work on the building site in Wales tomorrow (Monday).

Having run second for much of the three-day rally, 23-year-old Welshman Osian moved into the lead when his Portuguese rival Bernardo Sousa crashed on the 19th and final stage.

"I'm so happy," said Pryce, "so, so happy! It's incredible. And it's not just for me, so many people have worked *so* hard to put me in the position to fight for this championship this year and to pay them back with a win first time out in the car is really special."

Malcolm Wilson, two-time World Rally Championship-winning team principal and managing director of M-Sport – the firm which builds the Ford Fiesta R2Ts used in DDFT, was impressed with what he saw from Pryce.

"To do this on his debut in the Fiesta R2T is great," said Wilson. "It would have been difficult for him to come here and compete in a car which he's not so familiar with, but he's been very sensible and very quick, setting some fastest times on his way to the win.

"I told all of the drivers before the start, the key here was to play themselves in, learn the car and don't try to do too much too quickly. Osian and Dale have done that and come out as winners."

Osian won the category by 1m45.1s from Max Vatanen, son of 1981 world champion Ari.

"Our morning had gone very well today," Osian said, "we weren't taking any risks. We had a good margin to Max and the aim was to maintain that and take points for second place and some bonus points for stage wins. When we saw Bernardo's car on its side, I couldn't really believe it.

"Straight away, Dale said: "Concentrate!" I must admit, for the next corner or couple of corners, I did have a quick think about things, but then I was back focused on bringing the car home for the win.

"We came close to winning the Junior WRC class on this rally last year and then in Poland as well, but both times we missed out. To finally do it, to finally win at this level makes up for all that disappointment. It's an incredible feeling."

Winner at world championship level or not, Osian will be back at work tomorrow (Monday) morning.

"We're flying out of Portugal late tonight and then it's back to it in the morning," said Osian, who works as a builder. "I think we'll have a bit of a celebration at the airport, but I'll be in work at eight o'clock tomorrow morning. It's going to be a bit surreal to be back on the site after doing what we were doing 24 hours earlier!"

Despite taking that first win, Osian's eye is on the big prize on offer at next month's Rally Poland (June 30-July3), DDFT round two.

A strong result in the Polish lake district will be enough for him to land two drives in an M-Sport Ford Fiesta R5 next season.

Osian explained: "The way the DDFT prize is structured, there are two drives on offer to the person with the most points from Portugal and Poland; Poland and Finland and finally Germany and Spain. We've got to be completely focused on scoring some big points in Poland – if we do that, I think that would be an even bigger celebration!

"I must admit I've absolutely loved this event. Making the switch from Junior WRC to DDFT was absolutely the right move for me this season; the car has been faultless on what's been a pretty tough rally and the tyres have performed perfectly on some of the rockiest roads I've seen. I've got to thank everybody at DMACK and M-Sport for a great weekend and a brilliant week!"

Today was...

Osian's day in detail. His times against his DDFT rivals.

SS16: 3rd fastest (2nd in DDFT) *cautious run after seeing so many rocks around*

SS17: 2nd fastest (2nd in DDFT) *fantastic first run at the famous Fafe test*

SS18: 2nd fastest (2nd in DDFT) *quick, consistent and trouble-free run*

SS19: 4th fastest (1st in DDFT) WINNERS

Weather:

Today: misty then sunny (then very, very sunny!). Temperatures: 11-22 Celsius.

Tomorrow is...

Monday May 23

A day of celebration (... on the building site).

Next time...

Rally Poland

June 30-July 3

Based: Mikolajki

Surface: gravel

Osian outings: 1 (2015, 2nd Junior WRC)

Osian says: "Poland was a real bitter-sweet experience for Dale and I last year. We led the Junior WRC round for pretty much the whole event, only to suffer an alternator problem on the final day. We finished second and I was absolutely gutted. Imagine that... second on only my second ever Junior WRC round and I was disappointed; that shows how close we'd come to winning. "Poland was probably the fastest rally I had ever done. And the stages this year will be just as quick, demanding exactly the same commitment and the perfect set of pace notes to get them right. Carrying speed through the corners is so important – it's in these areas that this rally will be won or lost."

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 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

Media contact:

Miguel Fonseca

+351 913 772 088

miguel.fonseca@acp.pt

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.

Media contact:

Sandra Evans

+44 7887 693993

sandra@wordspr.com