

News release
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Osian dominates but departs home BRC round disappointed

Osian Pryce left his home round of the British Rally Championship empty-handed despite storming into an untroubled lead on this weekend's Nicky Grist Stages.

The 24-year-old Welshman, who led from the very first stage, was forced out of the season's only mixed-surface round on the second of Sunday's 12 tests on the Epynt military ranges. A problem with the fuel pump on his Alpera/Hills Ford Fiesta R5 stopped the car and cost Osian and Dale their lead in the British Rally Championship.

Unstoppable through the opening day, Osian's stunning effort was even more merit-worthy considering it came just eight days after he crashed a DMACK World Rally Team Fiesta R5 out of Rally Poland.

As any seasoned rally-watcher will testify, first on the road on a gravel rally in hot, dry conditions isn't always the place to be; the loose stones which sit on the surface have to be swept aside to provide those following with a cleaner line which offers progressively more grip.

The flip side of this, of course, is that while those running behind benefit from a faster road, they will suffer from dustier conditions. Osian's seen this argument from both sides.

"We were running further down the field on the Pirelli (International Rally, April 29/30)," said Osian, "and we got some dust in Kielder, nobody likes the dust – it's easy to get distracted and let that kind of thing get to you. But, I have to say, running first on the road in those stages really wasn't easy on Saturday. There's a psychological element to that one as well: you just know that you're sweeping the line for the guys behind and handing them a real advantage. Dale and I just got our heads down, got away with a few skids and a few slides on the first loop, but we kept at it and built a nice lead."

With a lead of 23.4 seconds after the first of the Saturday afternoon stages, Osian was satisfied.

"That was enough for me," he said. "Given that we were going back into the stages we'd used this morning, I expected the line to be a bit cleaner and I thought the guys behind would be taking more time out of me – especially with some of them running two-minute gaps to ease any dust issues. When we were fastest again in there, I decided to drive to try to control the event. I was quite pleased about that; I'd felt pretty rotten on the event with some sort of flu-thing."

Sterling work from the Spencer Sport team turned the Fiesta R5 from gravel to asphalt specification on Saturday night and the loose-surfaces of day one gave way to the circuit-smooth asphalt of the Epynt military ranges on day two.

It wasn't long before Osian was once again seeing the down side of being the first competing car on the road – this time it was a livestock-related issue.

"There are plenty of sheep around on the ranges and running first on the road you're more likely to come across any stragglers," said Osian. "Well, we found one on the first stage..."

Slightly distracted, Osian hit one of the straw bales used as a chicane, then found more sheep in the road. Despite that tricky start, he remained out front and was starting to look good for a first BRC win of the season – the perfect result to further build his championship lead at the top of the table.

Then, everything went quiet.

"We gradually lost power in stage 12," said Osian. "Then the engine went completely. I switched everything off and tried to start it, but there was nothing. We were on a hill, so I tried to bump it, but there was nothing there. That was the end of that. Gutted."

That fuel problem not only cost Osian his championship lead, but it also halted an impressive run of podium finishes, with a top three result from all four previous rounds.

The Machynlleth driver now has two more events, next month's Ulster Rally and September's Rally Isle of Man, to get his title tilt back on track. Before then, he's off to the fastest rally in the world to rejoin the DMACK World Rally Team for Rally Finland.

"I have to put the BRC to one side for the next round," said Osian. "I have an unbelievable opportunity in Finland at the end of this month. After the crash in Poland, I'm determined to put things right and show the DMACK World Rally Team what I can do.

"One of the good things about this weekend was that Dale and I had no hangover at all from what was a pretty big crash in Poland. We're ready to get back on it in Finland – but we're both really disappointed not to be going there on the back of a first BRC win and an extended lead at the top of the British championship."

This time...

BRC round 5/7

Nicky Grist Stages

Result: DNF

Based: Builth Wells

Stages: 20

Total distance: 191.67 miles

Competitive distance: 117.10 miles

After building up a solid lead through the classic Welsh woods, Osian's Ford Fiesta R5 succumbs to a fuel-pump problem on the second day over the Epynt ranges. Retiring hurts, but retiring from the lead always hurts just a little bit more.

SS1: fastest (1st overall)

SS2: fastest (1st overall)

SS3: fastest (1st overall)

SS4: fastest (1st overall)

SS5: fastest (1st overall)

SS6: 2nd fastest (**1st overall**)

SS7: 2nd fastest (**1st overall**)

SS8: 3rd fastest (**1st overall**)

SS9: 2nd fastest (**1st overall**)

SS10: 2nd fastest (**1st overall**)

SS11: 4th fastest (**1st overall**)

SS12: retired

Weather:

Sunny Saturday and Sunday (apart on SS12, when a big cloud gathered over the #1 Ford Fiesta R5...)

Next time...

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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