

News release
19.08.17

No pressure brings big pressure for Pryce in Ulster

Welshman Osian Pryce lost a second possible British Rally Championship win to a fuel-related problem aboard his Ford Fiesta R5 at this week's John Mulholland Motors Ulster Rally.

Osian and co-driver Dale Furniss had been in the thick of the action through the Northern Irish lanes. They ended the opening leg less than a second behind rally leader Keith Cronin after a string of fastest times through the treacherously slippery stages.

Their efforts would, however, count for nothing when they were forced to retire the Alphera/Hills Ford from second place on the 11th of 14 stages.

Despite a second successive early bath, Osian found plenty of positives in his trip across the Irish Sea.

"I've been struggling to find the confidence in the car on the last few rallies," he said, "so to come here and be competitive like this is good news for me. I think we all know that, when it comes to anywhere in Ireland, Keith [Cronin] is probably king. He's got so much experience of these conditions and this style of road; so to be with him and beating him on some stages is really good for me – especially with this one being my second event in the car on Tarmac."

Pryce was particularly pleased with his storming drive through the final three Friday stages, when he slashed Cronin's advantage from 19 seconds to nine-tenths of a second. On stage four – Holly Hill – he was an astonishing 12 seconds faster (a second per mile) than everybody else. And that included dropping time with a 360-degree spin.

"Friday afternoon was fantastic," Osian said. "We came here to win and, ultimately, that hasn't been possible. But what we have done is show the pace we have and show that we've been able to take good time out of Fredrik [Ahlin, series leader] and leave him behind a bit here. That really shows progression for me. I'm happy with that."

The smiles weren't quite so wide on Saturday.

"I got caught out under braking at the first stage on Saturday," said Osian. "I had to grab the handbrake and spin the car. That meant we slid backwards into a wall – the wall definitely came off second best..."

"We dropped around 20 seconds with that problem – the exhaust was squashed and the concentration had gone a little bit for the rest of the stage.

We were still quickest again on one of the stages in the next loop, but it was on the repeat of that stage where we went off backwards that our rally ended.

"The car cut-out, just like it did on the Nicky Grist. I was so sure it was the same problem, I jumped out of the car, gave the fuel pump a whack and that got it going again. We were able to go flat-out for a quarter of a mile or something like that when it happened again. I did the same again and we could get the car started, but when we put it under load and tried to pull away it wouldn't run at all.

"Obviously, there's a lot of frustration to have the problem again and it goes without saying it hasn't helped our championship situation. I said before the event we had to win to keep the title chances alive. Now we're firmly in the hands of the other drivers and our chance is slim, to put it mildly. The final round (138.com Rally Isle of Man) is a double-header, which means we still have a mathematical chance of taking the title and that's all the motivation I need.

"We'll be back on the Isle of Man. I can't give up on this year."

This time...

BRC round 6/7

John Mulholland Motors Ulster Rally

Result: DNF (mechanical)

Based: Ebrington

Stages: 14

Total distance: 420.04 miles

Competitive distance: 133.90 miles

For the second BRC round in succession, a fuel pressure problem costs Osian a shot at victory. Fastest by some margin on Friday afternoon, he was running second when the car stopped without warning on SS11. He retired in the stage.

SS1: 6th fastest (6th overall)

SS2: fastest (3rd overall)

SS3: 6th fastest (3rd overall)

SS4: fastest (2nd overall)

SS5: fastest (2nd overall)

SS6: fastest (2nd overall)

SS7: 7th fastest (2nd overall)

SS8: 2nd fastest (2nd overall)

SS9: 3rd fastest (2nd overall)

SS10: 3rd fastest (2nd overall)

Weather:

Wet on Friday, damp and drying on Saturday.

Next time...

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.

The rest of 2017...

*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

Osian Pryce media office:

Sandra Evans

Sandra@wordspr.com

(+44) 7887 693993