

News release
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Osian: it's the dream ticket. Part two.

Money can't buy the experience Osian Pryce will get when he joins the DMACK World Rally Team for Rally Finland next week – the Welshman will be back among the sport's elite as he takes to the fastest roads on planet earth.

Success in last season's Drive DMACK Fiesta Trophy won Osian two events in a Ford Fiesta R5 built and run by two-time world champion and current WRC series leaders M-Sport. Osian's first outing was cut short when he went off the road at Rally Poland last month, but next week is the big one: Neste Rally Finland.

Finland is the spiritual home of rallying and in the 38-year history of the sport, six Finns have won the World Rally Championship 13 times. In the first 50 years of Rally Finland (an event formerly known as the 1000 Lakes Rally), local drivers won their nation's biggest motorsport event 44 times.

"Finland's a really big deal in our sport," said Osian. "The Monte Carlo Rally might still be the best known rally in the world, but it's Finland that everybody wants to win. It's huge."

And next week, Osian and co-driver Dale Furniss will stand shoulder-to-shoulder with the world's finest drivers. In fact, the Welsh pair could be having breakfast alongside four-time world champion Frenchman Sébastien Ogier.

"The prize for winning the Drive DMACK title last year really is pretty unreal," said Osian. "You are taken into the DMACK World Rally Team and given the full treatment. DMACK runs alongside the M-Sport team, so that means we're sharing the same team as Sébastien Ogier. When we were in Poland last month, I sat down to eat and he was at the table next to Dale and I. It was a fantastic opportunity and real insight into the world of rallying at the very top.

"Obviously, I didn't take everything out of that opportunity in Poland and crashing early in the event was just about the worst possible result. But I have another chance next week and I'm going to grab it with both hands. Having said that, I've got to get the car to the finish and that's the aim for me. Where I know the road from last year, we'll look to show our speed, but the finish and the experience of driving these roads for three days is what next week's about."

Osian caught the eye of the locals last season when he set a string of fastest times and led his class after the opening day. Returning on Sunday after sliding off the road on Saturday, Osian's Ford Fiesta R2 was unbeaten on the

final day in an extraordinary display of speed through the fastest of fast Finnish stages.

"Everybody told me Finland would be so, so hard to learn first time out," he said, "and there's no doubt it's one of the most technical rallies I've ever done. With all of that in mind, I was delighted to come to Finland and show the speed we did on our debut. What we did last year will really help next week.

"Last year we were here in a front-wheel drive Fiesta, this time around we've got a huge amount more power and four-wheel drive; honestly coming to this event and driving an M-Sport Fiesta R5 makes all the hard work worth it. It also makes me hungry for so much more."

But for now, it's eyes down for Osian and a maximum focus on the two practice runs he and Dale will get at the super-fast Finnish roads.

"The recce is vital for every rally," said Osian, "but in Finland it's even more important. There are so many jumps along the route and every one is different and requires a different line in and different way of landing. It's tempting to take a lot of speed into the jump and fly as far as you can, but that can damage the car and it's not always the fastest way.

"It's a real fine line with the jumps: you want to carry the speed, but you want the wheels on the ground and pushing you forward for as long as possible. I've been watching hours of onboard to see what the other drivers are doing over those jumps."

In a week's time, Osian and Dale will be flying for themselves.

About Rally Finland

Thursday July 27 – Sunday July 30

Based: Jyväskylä

Surface: gravel

Stages: 25

Competitive distance: 314.20km (195.24 miles)

Liaison distance: 1111.76km (690.84 miles)

Website: www.nesterallyfinland.fi/en/

Rally Finland itinerary

Thursday July 27

SS1 Harju 1 2.31km (1.43 miles) 1900

Friday July 28

SS2 Halinen 1 7.65km (4.75 miles) 0712

SS3 Urria 1 12.75km (7.92 miles) 0745

SS4 Jukojärvi 1 21.31km (13.24 miles) 0848

SS5 Halinen 2 7.65km (4.75 miles) 1006

SS6 Urria 2 12.75km (7.92 miles) 1039
SS7 Jukojärvi 2 21.31km (13.24 miles) 1142
Service Jyväskylä 1317
SS8 Äänekoski-Valtra 1 7.39km (4.59 miles) 1500
SS9 Laukaa 1 11.76km (7.30 miles) 1613
SS10 Lankamaa 21.68km (13.47 miles) 1711
SS11 Äänekoski-Valtra 2 7.39km (4.59 miles) 1809
SS12 Laukaa 2 11.76km (7.30 miles) 1922
SS13 Harju 2 2.31km (1.43 miles) 2030
Service Jyväskylä 2050

Saturday July 29

SS14 Pihlajakoski 1 14.90km (9.25 miles) 0858
SS15 Päijälä 1 22.68km (14.09 miles) 1006
SS16 Ouninpohja 1 24.38km (15.14 miles) 1049
SS17 Saalahti 1 4.21km (2.61 miles) 1202
Service Jyväskylä 1252
SS18 Saalahti 2 4.21km (2.61 miles) 1455
SS19 Ouninpohja 2 24.38km (15.14 miles) 1608
SS20 Pihlajakoski 2 14.90km (9.25 miles) 1716
SS21 Päijälä 2 22.68km (14.09 miles) 1824
Service 2029

Sunday July 30

SS22 Lempää 1 6.80km (4.22 miles) 0925
SS23 Oittila 1 10.12km (6.28 miles) 1008
SS24 Lempää 2 6.80km (4.22 miles) 1147
SS25 Oittila 2 10.12km (6.28 miles) 1318
Finish Podium 1500

Osian's five Finnish facts

Planning a trip to Finland for the rally? Why not come out a bit earlier for one of the country's other big competitions: the Wife Carrying World Championship in Sonkajärvi.

The world's most recognised part-timer lives in Finland... Santa Claus officially resides in a house built right on top of the Arctic Circle, near Rovaniemi, Finland.

World's biggest coffee drinkers? Easy. Italy. Wrong! Finland. Finns consume 12 kilos of coffee annually, twice the amount Italy manages. And Toyota driver Jari-Matti Latvala likes the stuff so much, he's got his own brand of coffee.

1,000 lakes? Forget it. There are loads more than 1000 lakes in Finland. To be precise, there are 187,888 lakes and 179,584 islands within the national boundaries. Nowhere in the world has more of either.

Fancy going back in time? Then pop across the border and into neighbouring Sweden. The national boundary is a time-zone marker with Finland GMT+2, while Sweden's GMT+1. Two new years in one hour anybody?

This 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.

Next time...

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.

The rest of 2017...

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.

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: 71

British Rally Championship event wins: 5*

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

World Rally Championship starts: 12

World Rally Championship class wins: 3

* Including Osian's dominant National Rally Cup victory on the Mid Wales Stages in 2016

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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