

News release
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Solberg on top of the world at half-time

Is it important to be leading at half-time? Just ask Brazil's national football team. It's very important. And at half-time in the only world championship that matters – the FIA World Rallycross Championship – Petter Solberg is leading. The Norwegian driver dominated the final of World RX of Belgium and was only robbed of a second win in six races when he suffered rear suspension failure.

Solberg said: "We're ahead at half-time... and I'm not giving away the World RX lead now!"

"Fourth position is usually the worst one can achieve in the world of sport; you don't win and you just miss out on the podium. In Belgium I lost the race but won back the overall lead in the FIA World Rallycross Championship. Race wins are nice, but it's the championship we're all racing for.

"We started World RX of Belgium nine points behind Reinis Nitiss. Now we are three points ahead. Right now there are three drivers who stand out in the top: Nitiss (122 points), Belgium-winning Toomas Heikkinen (117) and I (125). I can't help but be happy with that.

"For the fourth place in the Belgium final, yes I'm disappointed. We were in third place out from the start. I passed a car early and started to hunt down Heikkinen on lap two. Oddly enough the Finn went into the joker lap on that lap and sent me straight into the lead.

"To take advantage of that opportunity, I pushed very hard. Throughout the weekend, we'd had the fastest lap times at the Circuit Jules Tacheny and I was really enjoying it, pushing it again and opening up a bigger and bigger lead. But then on the third lap, the right-rear suspension broke after landing from the jump. The suspension took a proper beating and the left-hand side broke as well.

"Driving for a victory in the FIA World Rallycross Championship with the rear of the car so low is just not possible. The back of the Citroen just sat down on the wheels, it was so difficult. My back is sore and painful – I took a bit of a beating as well!

"I fought and fought like hell to keep the car at the front, I was really thinking a podium might still be possible; I'm quite an optimist! In the end, when I took my joker lap, it wasn't possible to squeeze into the top-three.

"So I had to settle with the sour fourth place. But it didn't take too many seconds before I turned disappointment to joy. My goal for the season is the title. I want to become the first ever world champion in two different professional

motorsports; Englishman John Surtees has done it on two wheels and four, but I want to be the first to do both titles in a car.

“Now the road lies wide open for that objective.

“In the second half of the season I will continue the strategy of picking the most possible points from all World RX rounds: be smart and run with minimal risk. One or two wins can easily be sacrificed on our way towards the big trophy.

“To whoever may think otherwise: I’m not giving away the World RX lead again!”

So, that’s it. The first half of the season is done. And it’s been amazing. Our feet haven’t touched the ground since we won in Portugal just over three months ago. The racing’s been close, close and very close, the supercars have been stunning and the action awesome.

That’s all for now. We’ve got a lot of packing to do; the PSRX team kit needs to be on the boat to Canada tomorrow and the guys reckon there’s a hell of a lot to do tonight (and a World Cup to watch, let’s see who else can lead at half-time...).

For me, Per-Espen, the PR man, I just have to pack the laptop. #travellight

See you.

One thing we liked about Circuit Jules Tacheny:

Leaving Belgium as championship leaders. That’s a nice feeling.

One thing we didn’t like about Circuit Jules Tacheny:

Waffles. Think they needed a bit more Maple Syrup. Any idea where we can get some? Quebec? Really. Oh yeah, The Canadian province of Quebec is the world’s largest producer of Maple Syrup (an industry worth €100m per year to Quebec). Just as well we’re going next month!

Final result:

1 Toomas Heikkinen	4m05.840s
2 Timmy Hansen	4m06.175s
3 Johan Kristoffersson	4m06.988s
4 Petter Solberg	4m08.768s
5 Anton Marklund	4m12.534s
6 Pontus Tidemand	N/A

Championship positions:

1 Petter Solberg	125pts
2 Reinis Nitiss	122pts
3 Toomas Heikkinen	117pts
4 Andreas Bakkerud	99pts
5 Anton Marklund	85pts
6 Timmy Hansen	78pts

Next time out (World RX of Canada August 7-8)

Everybody loved Leslie Nielsen in The Naked Gun. Probably even more in Airplane! But, did you know, Leslie was Canadian? Even more interestingly, did you know Nielsen's brother Erik was Canada's deputy prime minister for two years? If those Canada facts don't do it for you... try this: Canada has the longest coastline in the world at just over 202,000 kilometres. Amazing. Oh, and World RX goes to Canada for the first time next month. The FIA World Rallycross Championship leaders will see you there.

But in the meantime, if you want to know more:

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