

PSRX Friday facts

FIA World Rallycross Championship Round 8
World RX of France
September 6-7

Petter's guide to Lohéac

The crowds at this year's World RX rounds are just getting bigger and bigger. And I'm sure next week's will be the biggest yet in France. Last year we had something like 60,000 people there, it was unbelievable. I think it will be more this time.

And I want to make my result one better. I was second last year.

The atmosphere around Lohéac is fantastic. The circuit is quite technical and maybe not the most flowing track of the season, but it definitely makes for some good racing. The joker lap doesn't come in until the third corner and I like that – it makes sure there is some really good, close racing for the first half of the first lap.

I'm sure when we go into that first right-hander at the end of the short start-finish straight, we can be many cars side-by-side, maybe even all five of us in the heat! Honestly, the racing is that close. And next weekend we have the field of 39 supercars – there's going to be some intense racing and a crazy atmosphere.

After that first right turn we go into a long left which is where the circuit goes to gravel. The surface isn't so much like gravel as we know it, though. It's a really hard surface and if it's hot weather then the whole lap can be just like asphalt. I think this circuit will suit drivers who prefer the Tarmac and that's not always for me. I love the gravel and sliding the car around.

We are testing at another circuit close to Lohéac next week, where we will be running some new dampers and working on the chassis to tune the car for a harder surface. Not having so much loose gravel usually means closer races as well. Having said that, if it does rain, it gets really, really slippery.

When you do pull into the joker lap, it's a good one with a jump and a curve in there as well. Then there's another right into a left, with one more open corner where you can push the car on some more.

This is a track where you have to drive neat and tidy, but that's tough when the cars are all so close around you. One guy who I'm sure will be close around us is Ken Block. I haven't seen my old friend since he finished right behind me at my home race in Hell in round three. It's great to see Ken back, he's a real character and like me in that he understands that you have to show some emotion in what we are doing.

The aim for me next week is to stay at the front of the championship. At this end of the season, that's all I'm interested in is staying ahead. And my son Oliver is

the same – he’s leading his Crosskart Championship, so we can have father-and-son chats about how we are going to stay ahead. Oliver’s having a really, really fantastic year. He’s only 12 and the guy who is second behind him is 16!

Now it’s time to get the trucks rolling and start the journey to France.

Circuit:

Length: 1.150km

Width: 16m

Tarmac: 35%

Dirt 65%

Website: www.rallycrossloheac.net

Timetable

Saturday September 6

1200 practice

1430 qualifying heats

1600 qualifying heats

Sunday September 7

0930 qualifying heats

1115 qualifying heats

1615 semi final/final

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