

World RX, Norway rights-free words from PSRX

Welcome from Petter Solberg

Home. Finally, home.

Hello to Norway and my fellow Norwegians. You all know how much I love driving my car and how passionate I am about my home country – so when I get to combine the two, we're in for a very special weekend.

The track here in Hell is a special one, it's a really natural circuit which challenges the drivers, makes you think and works both the driver and the car very hard. It's the kind of place I love.

And it's the kind of place where I'm really determined to win. I came close last year – we were just one second behind Reinis Nitiss in the end. Nitiss drove a great race, but in the middle of that race I had to make a decision about the strategy. I was ahead in the championship and didn't want to risk more points chasing for the win, so I settled for second place in Norway and stayed ahead in the season-long race.

For any driver, those kind of situations are difficult, but my time in motorsport has taught me that you have to be sensible and try to take the emotion out of the decision-making process. I can tell you, it is not easy to take the emotion out when you are driving a 600bhp on the loose, surrounded by lots of other cars ready to pounce and pass the moment you make the smallest of mistakes.

I guess the story is a little bit the same when we come this year. We've had a good start to the year and I am coming home in a strong position in the championship and I have to balance the risk of trying to win the race with the possible points we can take from the weekend. It's a really tough one, but you know guys, when I come to Hell, I will be pushing like hell!

We were second last year, this year it would be fantastic to make it one better.

Petter Solberg Q&A

Welcome home. Good to be back?

Definitely. There really isn't anywhere like your own home race. OK, Sweden is the home place for the team – PSRX is based just over the border from Norway in Torsby – but I was born in Norway and this is the race I really look forward to every year.

What makes it so special?

It's everything. It's the fact that everything is very familiar; everything from the road signs to what's being served for breakfast – it all feels completely normal.

What will you be having for breakfast?

What did James Hunt used to say? Maybe we shouldn't talk about James Hunt and what he had for breakfast! I will be having the usual, some coffee and some toast.

That doesn't sound very Norwegian...

Trust me, the coffee and toast in Norway is better than anywhere else!

Take us on a tour of Hell. What's it like as a track?

It's definitely one of the best on the calendar.

It's a tricky circuit?

They are all quite difficult, but yes, this one is quite technical as well as being quick at the same time.

Take us on a lap?

Of course! Basically, we go down the hill and then we come back up again. The first corner off the line is quite a tight right-hander, so you're hard on the brakes, but you have to be careful not to snatch a brake here – it's quite bumpy. You can take the joker lap here.

Then we really start going downhill. On and off the dirt, it's through a left-hander and then a flat-right which takes us into a tighter right. There's a lot of speed in the car at this section, so slowing it down for a loose-surface corner can be tough. And you have to be clean going into this bend because you really need the speed at the exit, when you start a long climb uphill on the gravel. This is where a good engine with a lot of torque works so well. Then we're through a quick-left hander and braking hard for the final right before we go back onto the start-finish straight to start another lap.

What's the hardest part about the track?

There's nothing too tricky, not one individual corner. When you are out there on your own, it's really cool to drive your own lines and really push the car. The trick comes in when you have five other guys dancing around you and trying to take your line, come around the outside or dive up the inside. Suddenly, everything is a little more compromised and you have to be ready for anything!

If you had any advice for your fellow Norwegians in Hell, what would it be?

Wave that flag! And let's win this thing together. I am fortunate enough to have a lot of fans around the world and they are all really special to me, but when I see the people with their faces painted in the red, white and blue of Norway, it always gives me an even more special emotion. They are my fuel to make me find some more speed.