

News release  
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## **Portuguese perfection for Petter**

### **Petter Solberg made the perfect start to his FIA World Rallycross Championship defence with victory in the final of Bompiso World RX of Portugal today (Sunday).**

Solberg and his PSRX squad face tougher competition than ever this season, with big budgets, factory teams and world champions arriving in the paddock to challenge his supremacy. In the end, it was only the weather that came close to toppling hero Hollywood; torrential rain and horrendously muddy conditions forced a Saturday night rethink for Petter's supercar set-up.

On Sunday, the sun shone and the sensational Solberg reigned supreme.

Petter said: "I am so happy. The team has worked so hard all over the winter, we had some of the guys living in the factory and working all of the hours in the day and today I could pay them back. We won!

"Yesterday (Saturday) wasn't such a good start. When I slid wide in the first race and we ran into the mud, everything looked quite dark. The weather was so bad and the mud so deep, the car wasn't working like we knew it could be. It was better with the second race, when I won, but on Saturday night I was a little bit worried. I thought maybe we couldn't even make the final – a podium position looked like another world!

"We shut the door, sat down and talked through our strategy in a team meeting. We stayed calm and we then worked on the car and came out confident on Sunday morning. When I saw the weather was better and felt that the car was working like I wanted, then things became possible again.

"The crucial thing we had agreed in the meeting was to stay calm and not do anything stupid. I drove like this through the heats on Sunday and made the semi-final. I must admit, it was a bit more difficult to stay calm when the launch system wasn't working perfectly at the start of the semi.

"I got off the line the old fashioned way: with a lot of revs. I had to do this in the final as well, but I must say I think I feel more confident using myself as the launch system rather than the car now.

"I did the same in the final and the start was good. Once we were in the clear, things were looking really good for me. I made a good strategy with the team for the joker and to win was amazing. It is fantastic.

"The level this year is crazy. It is very, very hard now – we are fighting like hell for every single point. Before the race, I said it could be possible for 10

drivers to win this race and we have seen how competitive so many of the guys are here in Portugal. We have more work to do and more speed to find from the car if we want to continue at the front.

“But tonight we celebrate. After a month on the road working and testing all of the time, to bring this result home is very, very special for PSRX.”

### **The PSRX race weekend**

#### **Q1 – 11<sup>th</sup> \***

In quite possibly the muddiest conditions in the history of the world, Petter slid wide in the gravel and finished down the order.

#### **Q2 – 7<sup>th</sup>**

Petter works on his driving style, taking a more conservative and less flamboyant approach to dominate his race in still very tricky wet conditions.

#### **Q3 – 4<sup>th</sup>**

The first qualification heat win from Petter, who shows his rivals a clean pair of heels in an inch-perfect run on Sunday morning.

#### **Q4 – 2<sup>nd</sup>**

Petter stays out of trouble and drives sensibly to take a trouble-free second position in his final qualification race.

#### **Semi-final – 1<sup>st</sup>**

Petter overcomes a launch control problem to lead from start to finish in a perfect semi-final, landing himself on pole for the final. And the sun comes out!

#### **Final – 1st**

Perfect Petter controls the final from the front to take a maximum score from Portugal for the second time in three years.

#### **Result:**

- 1 Petter Solberg 04:03.992**
- 2 Robin Larsson 04:04.839
- 3 Toomas Heikkinen 04:06.352
- 4 Andreas Bakkerud 04:07.767
- 5 Sebastien Loeb 04:29.298
- 6 Johan Kristoffersson 05:35.984

#### **Drivers' championship positions:**

- 1 Solberg 29pts**
- 2 Larsson 21pts
- = Kristoffersson 21pts
- 4 Bakkerud 20pts
- = Heikkinen 20pts
- 6 Ekstrom 19pts

**Next time out** World RX of Hockenheim (May 7/8)

It's the first of two German World RX rounds next as Petter takes his PSRX team back to the scene of his first 2015 victory. The Hockenheim circuit was a big hit with the drivers last season and the action's sure to be just as fast and furious as ever in three weeks.

\* Position after the race.

**Want to know more about your FIA World Rallycross Champion?**

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