

## The Loudon-clear guide to... **YPF Rally Argentina**

In recent seasons, one World Rally Championship round stands out as being wide open in terms of winners... Rally Argentina's had four different winners in the last four years.

Loeb, Latvala, Meeke and Paddon are the most recent names on a piece of silverware unique in the current era. What makes it unique? The absence of two words: Sébastien Ogier.

I reckon you'd get fairly short odds on a fifth different winner in as many years after seeing M-Sport's Frenchman on such sensational, fighting form last time out in Corsica. But next week's South American adventure remains the only current WRC counter Séb hasn't won.

Argentina's a favourite all-round. The crews love the challenging, quick, technical, watersplash-covered roads; photographers love the classic southern hemisphere autumn light; close to a million locals can't get enough of their favourite road race and everybody falls for the sight, smell and tastes of Asado-cooked beef washed down with Andes-sourced Malbec.

Argentina is a WRC classic – and it's one of the event's I'm looking forward to working on most in my career. Unfortunately, that won't be next week. Instead of travelling south of the equator with M-Sport, I'll be co-driving in a Ford Fiesta R5 car on some classic Scottish stages. While Cumbria's finest trek across the Atlantic, I'll be heading north to Elgin for Saturday's latest round of the Scottish Rally Championship, where I'm joining Dale Robertson.

After too long out of a rally car, I'm happy to say I've been calling pacenotes with a bit more frequency recently; I was co-driving at an M-Sport British Rally Championship test in Kielder earlier in the week. There's just no place like the inside of a rally car for full-on intensity, focus and utter exhilaration.

Making biscuits will always struggle to match the feeling of flying through the forests, but the arrival of a new robot at the Tunnock's factory in Uddingston certainly stirred some serious interest. This thing is huge. Huge like... arriving on the back of four articulated lorries! Watching it being assembled was fascinating, something the size of that being built to ultimately produce a Teacake that will sit in the palm of your hand (obviously, not for long!).

This is good news for Teacake fans: it means we'll be sending an extra million and a half biscuit-based, marshmallow-topped, chocolate-covered delights out through the door each week. The even better news for those of you in Villa Carlos Paz next week is that we've redirected a few towards Argentina.

## **Rally in detail**

FIA World Rally Championship round 5/13

WRC – WRC2

Date: Thursday April 27 – Sunday April 30

Based: Villa Carlos Paz

Service: Villa Carlos Paz

Stages: 18

Competitive distance: 357.59km (222.20 miles)

Liaison distance: 1060.59km (659.05 miles)

Total distance: 1417.98.km (881.13 miles)

Shortest stage: SS1 Super Special Cordoba 1.75km (1.08 miles)

Longest stage: SS11/14 Los Gigantes-Cantera El Condor 38.68km (24.03 miles)

Currency: Argentine Peso

Time difference: GMT -3

Language: Spanish

Argentina population: 43m

Capital: Buenos Aires

Sunrise: 0745

Sunset: 1843

## **Shakedown:**

The 6.01km (3.73 miles) shakedown stage is located along the Villa Carlos Paz-Cabalango stage, 11.02km (6.84 miles) from the service park at Villa Carlos Paz. The stage runs from 0800-1330 on Thursday April 27.

## **Rally Argentina itinerary**

Thursday April 27

SS1 Super Special Cordoba 1.75km (1.08 miles) 1908

Friday April 28

SS2 San Agustin – Villa General Belgrano 1 19.95km (12.39 miles) 0838

SS3 Amboy – Santa Monica 1 20.44km (12.70 miles) 0941

SS4 Santa Rosa – San Agustin 1 23.85km (14.82 miles) 1024

SS5 Super Special Fernet Branca 1 6.04km (3.75 miles) 1229

Service Villa Carlos Paz 1254

SS6 San Agustin – Villa General Belgrano 2 19.95km (12.39 miles) 1502

SS7 Amboy – Santa Monica 2 20.44km (12.70 miles) 1605

SS8 Santa Rosa – San Agustin 2 23.85km (14.82 miles) 1648

SS9 Super Special Fernet Branca 2 6.04km (3.75 miles) 1908

Service Villa Carlos Paz 1933

Saturday April 29

SS10 Tanti – Villa Bustos 1 20.80km (12.92 miles) 0808

SS11 Los Gigantes – Cantera El Condor 1 38.68km (24.03 miles) 0921

SS12 Boca del Arroyo – Bajo del Pungo 1 20.52km (12.75 miles) 1014

Service Villa Carlos Paz 1154

SS13 Tanti – Villa Bustos 2 20.80km (12.92 miles) 1308

SS14 Los Gigantes – Cantera El Condor 2 38.68km (24.03 miles) 1421

SS15 Boca del Arroyo – Bajo del Pungo 2 20.52km (12.75 miles) 1514

Service Villa Carlos Paz 1654

Sunday April 30

SS16 El Condor – Copina 16.32km (10.14 miles) 0913

SS17 Mina Clavero – Giulio Cesare 22.64km (14.06 miles) 1056

SS18 El Condor 16.32km (10.14 miles) 1218

Finish Carlos Paz 1455

### **2016 Rally Argentina result:**

**WRC:** 1 Hayden Paddon/John Kennard (Hyundai NG i20 WRC) 3h40m52.9s; 2 Sébastien Ogier/Julien Ingrassia (Volkswagen Polo R WRC) +14.3s 3 Andreas Mikkelsen/Anders Jæger (Volkswagen Polo R WRC) 1m05.2s. **WRC2:** Nicolás Fuchs/Fernando Mussano (Škoda Fabia R5). **WRC3:** Michel Fabre/Maxime Vilmot (DS 3 R3T Max).

### **Top 10 running order:**

- 1 Sébastien Ogier/Julien Ingrassia (Ford Fiesta WRC)
- 9 Jari-Matti Latvala/Miikka Anttila (Toyota Yaris WRC)
- 5 Thierry Neuville/Nicolas Gilsoul (Hyundai i20 Coupe WRC)
- 3 Ott Tänak/Martin Järveoja (Ford Fiesta WRC)
- 6 Dani Sordo/Marc Marti (Hyundai i20 Coupe WRC)
- 8 Craig Breen/Scott Martin (Citroën C3 WRC)
- 7 Kris Meeke/Paul Nagle (Citroën C3 WRC)
- 4 Hayden Paddon/John Kennard (Hyundai i20 Coupe WRC)
- 3 Elfyn Evans/Dan Barritt (Ford Fiesta WRC)
- 11 Juho Hänninen/Kaj Lindström (Toyota Yaris WRC)

### **Leading WRC championship positions:**

- 1 Ogier 88pts; 2 Latvala 75; 3 Neuville 54; 4 Tanak 48; 5 Sordo 47; 6 Breen 33.

### **Leading WRC2 runners:**

- 31 Pontus Tidemand/Jonas Andersson (Škoda Fabia R5)
- 34 Hubert Ptaszek/Maciek Szczepaniak (Škoda Fabia R5)
- 35 Gustavo Rodriguez/Fernando Mussano (Škoda Fabia R5)
- 32 Benito Guerra/Daniel Cué (Škoda Fabia R5)
- 33 Pedro Heller/Pablo Olmos (Ford Fiesta R5)
- 36 Carlos Alonso/Matias Mercadal (Škoda Fabia R5)

### **Leading WRC2 championship positions:**

- 1 Andreas Mikkelsen 50pts; 2 Tidemand 50; 3 Eric Camilli 46.

**Stuart Loudon's key stage:** SS18 El Condor 16.32km (10.14 miles) This is not a difficult choice, especially after last year's brilliant finale down this road, when Hayden [Paddon] just edged Séb [Ogier] for the win. El Condor really is a fantastic power stage, one of the best of the season. It offers a genuine challenge to the crews and that challenge is totally in-keeping with the rest of the route.

All those hidden rocks on the line and narrow rope bridges provide a proper sting in the South American tail.

**Stuart will be watching...** #3 Elfyn Evans/Dan Barritt (Ford Fiesta WRC)

Elfyn and Dan just haven't had the luck going their way this so far this season, but I'm sure that's going to change in Argentina next week. Elfyn's in a pretty decent position on the road and he's got some good experience of the stages from the last few years. And, let's not forget, the conditions and the softer nature of the stages could bring out the best of the DMACK tyre package on his Ford Fiesta WRC.

**Weather with you:**

A few showers are likely through the recce and the run-up to the start, but once the event is underway the prediction is for sunshine and temperatures in the low to mid-twenties. Expecting it to be a wee bit cooler than that in Elgin tomorrow (Saturday)...

**Recent winners Rally Argentina:**

2007: Sébastien Loeb/Daniel Elena (Citroën C4)

2008: Sébastien Loeb/Daniel Elena (Citroën C4 WRC )

2009: Sébastien Loeb/Daniel Elena (Citroën C4 WRC)

2010: Juho Hänninen/Mikko Markkula (Škoda Fabia S2000)

2011: Sébastien Loeb/Daniel Elena (Citroën DS3 WRC)

2012: Sébastien Loeb/Daniel Elena (Citroën DS3 WRC)

2013: Sébastien Loeb/Daniel Elena (Citroën DS3 WRC)

2014: Jari-Matti Latvala/Miikka Anttila (Volkswagen Polo R WRC)

2015: Kris Meeke/Paul Nagle (DS 3 WRC)

2016: Hayden Paddon/John Kennard (Hyundai New Generation i20 WRC)

**Most successful driver on Rally Argentina:**

Sébastien Loeb (8 wins)

**2017 World Rally Championship stats...**

Stages planned: 65

Stages run: 60

Total competitive distance travelled: 1268.72km (788.38 miles)

Total distance travelled: 4805.44km (2986.10 miles)

Winners' total competitive time: 10h45m01.6s

Longest stage of the season: El Chocolate 1 54.90km (34.11 miles) Rally Mexico

Shortest stage of the season: Street Stage Guanajuato 1.09km (0.67 miles) Rally

Mexico

**Most WRC fastest times in 2017:** 1 Neuville 20; 2 Ogier/Meeke 8; 4 Latavla 7; 5 Tanak/Evans 6; 7 Sordo 4; 8 Lefebvre/Hänninen 1

Most WRC stages led in 2017: 1 Neuville 26; 2 Meeke 22; 3 Latvala 6; 4 Ogier 4; 5 Hanninen 2

**Most WRC2 fastest times in 2017:** 1 Tidemand 22; 2 Mikkelsen 17; 3 Camilli 7; 4 Kopecky 5; 5 Veiby/Suninen 3; 7 Bryan Bouffier 2; 8 Eyvind Brynildsen 1.

Most WRC2 stages led in 2017: 1 Tidemand 26; 2 Mikkelsen 25; 3 Camilli 6; 4 Veiby 3.

**Most JWRC fastest times in 2017:** 1 Terry Folb/Nils Solans 4; 3 Nicolas Ciamin 2.

Most JWRC stages led in 2017: 1 Solans 10.

**Most WRC3 fastest times in 2017:** 1 Raphael Astier 15; 2 Louise Cook 14; 3 Jakub Brzezinski 5; 4 Charles Martin 3; 5 Solans/Luca Panzani 1.

Most WRC3 stages led in 2017: 1 Astier 25; Cook 14.

**Most R-GT fastest times in 2017:** 1 Romain Dumas 17; Francois Delecour 6; Fabio Andolfi 2.

Most R-GT stages led in 2017: 1 Dumas 18; 2 Delecour 4; 3 Andolfi 3.

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**Stuart Loudon** is a semi-professional co-driver who has started 88 rallies (soon to be 89...), 19 of which are rounds of the World Rally Championship and one of which was with an Ashes-winning English cricketer. He makes biscuits in the family business when he's not working towards his dream of becoming a factory co-driver in the WRC.

Stuart Loudon and Words PR work their socks off to make sure every last dot and

detail of the document is 100 per cent accurate – but we can't be responsible for any changes to the itinerary or stage distances.

Stats courtesy of [ewrc-results.com](http://ewrc-results.com)