

The Loudon-clear guide to... **Dayinsure Wales Rally GB**

Loudon's ready for a reading week

Next week's going to be different. For one thing, I'll be wearing a suit. And doing a lot more reading, some writing and an awful lot more talking. I couldn't be more excited to be co-driving Matthew Wilson in a Ford Fiesta R5 for Dayinsure Wales Rally GB.

But it is going to be quite strange. Having worked as a co-ordinator at the M-Sport World Rally Team through this season, stepping back from there and getting into a car within the team structure will be a bit surreal. Even now, a week out from the event, it feels like I should be working on the weather crews' schedules, studying maps or worrying about when the rain's coming.

Instead, I've spent that time copying Scott Martin's pace notes out from when he and Matthew last did Rally GB in 2014. Obviously, a few of the stages have been tweaked in the last three years, so I'm sure we'll be making some changes to the notes.

And as soon as I clock into the first control on Thursday, I'll forget every other aspect of the M-Sport job I've been doing this year; competing at this level commands total focus. Fortunately, Matt and I know each other pretty well. We finished second on the Pirelli International Rally last year and we've done some testing through this season.

I can't wait. There's always something special about competing on your home round of the World Rally Championship. It's a really big deal and something I've missed so much in recent years. The last time I did it was 2014, when I did the WRGB National as part of a TV documentary with cricketer Graeme Swann. That was good. But this is great.

When you're going through the likes of Dyfi and Hafren, it's such a buzz. Every now and then you look up and see a saltire flying – now, I'm not under any illusions that they're flying for me – but it gives you such a sense of pride that you're part of something really big.

And, let's not forget, what an important event this is for M-Sport. Is there a better time to swap team kit for a race suit? I don't think so.

Dayinsure Wales Rally GB in detail

FIA World Rally Championship round 12/13

WRC – WRC2 – WRC3

Date: Thursday October 26 – Sunday October 29

Based: Deeside

Service: Deeside

Stages: 21

Competitive distance: 304.36km (189.12 miles)

Liaison distance: 1183.74km (735.57 miles)

Total distance: 1488.10km (924.70 miles)

Shortest stage: SS1 Visit ConwyTir Prince 1.49km (0.92 miles)

Longest stage: SS4/7 Hafren 35.14km (21.83 miles)

Currency: British Pound

Time difference: GMT

Sunrise: 0802

Sunset: 1747

Shakedown:

The 3.32km (2.06 miles) shakedown stage is located at Clocaenog Forest 44.37km (27.57 miles) from Deeside Service Park. The stage runs from 0800-1330 on Thursday October 26.

Dayinsure Wales Rally GB itinerary

Thursday October 26

SS1 Visit Conwy Tir Prince 1.49km (0.92 miles) 1900

Friday October 27

SS2 Myherin 1 20.28km (12.60 miles) 1020

SS3 Sweet Lamb 1 4.24km (2.63 miles) 1100

SS4 Hafren 1 35.14km (21.83 miles) 1115

Remote tyre fitting zone, Newtown, 1253

SS5 Myherin 2 20.28km (12.60 miles) 1431

SS6 Sweet Lamb 2 4.24km (2.63 miles) 1511

SS7 Hafren 2 35.14km (21.83 miles) 1526

Parc Fermé 1951

Saturday October 28

SS8 Aberhirnant 1 13.91km (8.64 miles) 0755

SS9 Dyfnant 1 17.91km (11.12 miles) 0847

SS10 Gartheiniog 1 12.61km (7.83miles) 0959

SS11 Dyfi 1 25.86km (16.06 miles) 1028

SS12 Gartheiniog 2 12.61km (7.83miles) 1208

SS13 Dyfi 2 25.86km (16.06 miles) 1237

SS14 Cholmondeley Castle 1.80km (1.11 miles) 1548

Service Deeside 1637

SS15 Aberhirnant 2 13.91km (8.64 miles) 1855

SS16 Dyfnant 2 17.91km (11.12 miles) 1947

Parc Fermé 2213

Sunday October 29

SS17 Alwen 1 10.41km (6.46 miles) 0834
SS18 Brenig 1 6.43km (3.99 miles) 0908
SS19 Gwydir 7.49km (4.65 miles) 1006
SS20 Alwen 2 10.41km (6.46 miles) 1109
SS21 Brenig 2 6.43km (3.99 miles) 1218
Parc Fermé 1335

2016 Dayinsure Wales Rally GB result:

WRC: 1 Sébastien Ogier/Julien Ingrassia (Volkswagen Polo R WRC) 3h14m30.2s; 2 Ott Tänak/Raigo Mõlder (Ford Fiesta RS WRC) +10.2s; 3 Thierry Neuville/Nicolas Gilsoul (Hyundai i20 WRC) +1m35.4s **WRC2:** Esapekka Lappi/Janne Ferm (Škoda Fabia R5) **WRC3:** Martin Koči/Lukáš Kostka (DS3 R3T Max)

Top 10 running order:

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

Leading WRC championship positions:

1 Ogier 198pts; 2 Tanak 161pts; 3 Neuville 160pts; 4 Latvala 123pts; 5 Sordo 94pts; 6 Evans 93pts.

Leading WRC2 runners:

31 Pontus Tidemand/Jonas Andersson (Škoda Fabia R5)
34 Teemu Suninen/Mikko Markkula (Ford Fiesta R5)
32 Eric Camilli/Benjamin Veillas (Ford Fiesta R5)
33 Ole Christian Veiby/Stig Rune Škjærmoen (Škoda Fabia R5)
36 Benito Guerro/Daniel Cué 36 (Škoda Fabia R5)
35 Simone Tempestini/Giovanni Bernacchini (Citroën DS3 R5)

52 Matthew Wilson/Stuart Loudon (Ford Fiesta R5)

Leading WRC2 championship positions:

1 Tidemand 133pts; 2 Suninen/Kopecky 85pts; 4 Camilli 77pts.

Leading WRC3 runners:

61 Raphaël Astier/Frédéric Vaucclare (Peugeot 208 R2)
62 Enrico Brazzoli/Maurizio Barone (Peugeot 208 R2)

Leading WRC3 championship positions:

1 Solans 144pts; 2 Ciamin 88pts; 3 Astier 86pts.

Stuart Loudon's key stage: SS9/16 Dyfnant 1 17.91km (11.12 miles)

Depending on the weather and the grip around, every one of the forest stages in Wales could be key. But Dyfnant the first time through, when the sun's just rising and still sitting low in the screen, will be tricky. And then, when we come back for the second shot at it, it'll be pitch black.

A re-run stage in the dark can bring its own complications. It's not uncommon for a driver to get lulled into a false sense of security, having driven in the daylight, it's easy to think: "Yeah, I know this bit. I ran a bit wider here this morning..." only to be quite disorientated and in a different place on the stage. The notes will be absolutely vital second time through Dyfnant.

And rallying in the dark really is something special. I sit in my own pool of light and keep calling the notes. You feel quite cocooned in there. When you look up and see the lights picking everything out in such detail, the contrast is incredible to looking out of the side window.

Definitely one of the most interesting times in the dark is when you're sideways. The driver has committed to a corner because you've told him to and now all the light is directed towards the bushes at the side of the road – the driver's looking out of the side window into pitch darkness. When the car straightens and the lights pick out a long straight ahead, the sense of satisfaction is like nothing else.

Stuart will be watching... the whole M-Sport World Rally Team (obviously)

With the world waiting, it's all eyes on the Cumbrians in Wales. This is a team ready to make history with Sébastien Ogier, Julien Ingrassia, Ott Tänak, Martin Jarveoja, Elfyn Evans and Dan Barritt. Some amazing things could happen to this brilliant trio of crews on Sunday afternoon.

As a reminder, like you needed one... M-Sport needs four points to secure the manufacturers' title and Séb leads Ott by 37 points in the drivers' standings.

Might be worth keeping an eye out for the #52 Fiesta as well. Remember Matt's Michelin Pilot livery last time he did Rally GB in 2014? That was a classic – and I hope you'll think the same about this year's colour scheme. We like it...

Weather with you:

Yeah, there's not really any way of sugar-coating this one: it might rain. Pack a mac. There's the chance of some sunshine, but it's looking like clouds will be a fairly fixed feature for the week ahead. Temperature-wise, we're looking between 10 and 16. So even if you get wet, at least you won't be cold and wet.

Recent winners Dayinsure Wales Rally GB:

2006: Marcus Grönholm/Timo Rautiainen (Ford Focus RS WRC 06)

2007: Mikko Hirvonen/Jarmo Lehtinen (Ford Focus RS WRC 07)

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

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

2010: Sébastien Loeb/Daniel Elena (Citröen C4 WRC)

2011: Jari-Matti Latvala/Miikka Anttila (Ford Fiesta RS WRC)

2012: Jari-Matti Latvala/Miikka Anttila (Ford Fiesta RS WRC)

2013: Sébastien Ogier/Julien Ingrassia (Volkswagen Polo R WRC)

2014: Sébastien Ogier/Julien Ingrassia (Volkswagen Polo R WRC)

2015: Sébastien Ogier/Julien Ingrassia (Volkswagen Polo R WRC)

2016: Sébastien Ogier/Julien Ingrassia (Volkswagen Polo R WRC)

Most successful driver(s) on Dayinsure Wales Rally GB:

Sébastien Ogier, Hannu Mikkola, Petter Solberg (4 wins)

2017 World Rally Championship stats...

Stages planned: 209

Stages run: 203

Total competitive distance travelled: 3544.15km (2202.33 miles)

Total distance travelled: 14557.18km (9045.83 miles)

Winners' total competitive time: 32h28m30.9s

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 43; 2 Tänak 25; 3 Latvala 24; 4 Meeke 20; 5 Ogier 19; 6 Evans 17; 7 Lappi 15; 8 Sordo 15; 9 Paddon 11; 10 Hänninen 7; 11 Suninen 4; 12 Mikkelsen 3; 13 Østberg/Breen 2; 15 Lefebvre/Kopecky 1

Most WRC stages led in 2017: 1 Neuville/Tänak 40; 3 Meeke 38; 4 Latvala 22; 5 Evans 17; 6 Ogier 13; 7 Lappi 12; 8 Paddon 9; 9 Mikkelsen 6; 10 Hänninen 3; 11 Østberg 2; 12 Kopecky/Sordo 1

Most WRC2 fastest times in 2017: 1 Tidemand 47; 2 Jan Kopecky 45; 3 Mikkelsen 29; 4 Veiby 16; 5 Jari Huttunen 15; 6 Suninen 14; 7 Camilli 12; 8 Gus Greensmith 9; 9 Benito Guerra/Juuso Nordgren 4; 11 Yohan Rossel/Saba Gustavo/Bryan Bouffier/Pierre-Louis Loubet/Umberto Scandola/Yoann Bonato 2; 17 Eyvind Brynildsen/Katsuta Takamoto/Lukasz Pieniazek/Quentin Gilbert/Jon Armstrong 1

Most WRC2 stages led in 2017: 1 Tidemand 46; 2 Mikkelsen 43; 3 Kopecky 32; 4 Veiby 24; 5 Huttunen 23; 6 Suninen 19; 7 Camilli 13; 8 Greensmith/Rossel/Scandola 1

Most JWRC fastest times in 2017: 1 Nil Solans 42; 2 Nicolas Ciamin 35; 3 Terry Folb 25; 4 Denis Rådstrom 14; 5 Rob Duggan 5; 6 Emil Lindholm 3; 7 Julius Tannert 2; 8 Sebastian Careaga/Dillon Van Way 1

Most JWRC stages led in 2017: 1 Solans 60; 2 Ciamin 32; 3 Tannert 13; 4 Rådstrom 8; 5 Folb 2; 6 Lindholm 1

Most WRC3 fastest times in 2017: 1 Solans 43; 2 Ciamin 34; 3 Astier 29; 4 Folb 19; 5 Louise Cook 14; 6 Rådstrom 13; 7 Jakub Brzezinski 11; 8 Duggan 5; 9 Enrico Brazzoli/Charles Martin 3; 11 Lindholm/Francisco Name/Tannert 2; 14 Luca Panzani/Dillon Van Way/Sebastian Careaga 1

Most WRC3 stages led in 2017: 1 Solans 49; 2 Ciamin 32; 3 Astier 26; 4 Cook 14; 5 Tannert 13; 6 Brzezinski 12; 7 Rådstrom 8; 8 Name 7; 9 Folb 2; 10 Lindholm 1

Most R-GT fastest times in 2017: 1 Romain Dumas 39; 2 Francois Delecour/Andrea Nucita 6; 4 Fabrizio Andolfi 3; 5 Andrea Modanesi/Fabio Andolfi 2

Most R-GT stages led in 2017: 1 Dumas 39; 2 Fabrizio Andolfi/Delecour 4; 4 Fabio Andolfi 3; 5 Nucita 2

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Stuart Loudon is a semi-professional co-driver who has started 95 rallies, 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