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News release

Stuart takes experience from Var debut

Despite a tough weekend of competition at the Rallye du Var, Scottish star co-driver Stuart Loudon takes more valuable experience from the south of France.

Stuart's weekend was all about firsts: it was his first time on the Sainte-Maxime-based event; first time working with Swedish driver Mattias Adielsson and first time competing in a Citroën C3 R5.

Unfortunately for the Scottish-Swedish pairing a seemingly innocuous knock on the second stage of Saturday morning ruled them out of a potential result when the car sustained rear suspension damage.

Despite being forced to retire from Saturday, an upbeat Stuart was happy to have tackled what he felt were some of the toughest stages of his career.

"I didn't really know what to expect from this event," said Stuart. "I'd watched video footage from previous years, but I've never competed in the Var region of France before.

"The reality was really tough. This rally was a bit like Corsica on steroids! It was corner, corner, corner all the time, but on top of that the wet weather meant the surface and grip level was changing all the time. Definitely these were some of the hardest, if not *the* hardest stages I've ever read notes on.

"There was very little rhythm in there, the speed of the notes was going up and down all the time. There was just no consistency from corner-to-corner. The concentration was absolutely at the maximum. It was pretty intense!

"We talk about it being a first for me, it was the same for Mattias: it was his first time with me; first time using English notes and first time in a new and different rally car. And he hadn't competed on Tarmac for over a year. Considering all of that, he did really well.

"The problem on Saturday was pretty bizarre: the car went fractionally wide in a first-gear corner and touched a telegraph pole. That broke a bracket in the suspension and left the wheel moving about in the arch. We could probably have carried on to the end of the stage, but Mattias was understandably worried about doing more damage to the car.

"It was good to get back for Sunday morning. We were out of service just after six, so the first of three stages was in the dark – that makes for a really special atmosphere and tearing through the mountains is one heck of a way to start a Sunday!"

The Rallye du Var marks the end of Stuart's 2018 campaign, with Uddington's fastest Teacake maker already eyeing an exciting 2019.

"It's maybe a wee bit frustrating that we didn't get the result we came to the south of France looking for," said Stuart, "but it's great to have come here, to a new event having worked with a new driver, new team (Sainteloc) and a new car. I take away a lot of experience from this event and so much of this sport is about experience.

"It's back to the biscuits for me now, with a bit of a break from rallying. But it's full steam ahead for next season. I'm talking to a few drivers about some potential programmes in 2019. Let's see what happens."

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Stuart Loudon is a semi-professional co-driver who has started 104 rallies, 21 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.