

The Tunnock's guide to... Wales Rally GB

**Welcome from Wales Rally GB organisers:**

Welcome to Wales Rally GB – an award-winning event that just keeps getting better and better since its move to a new base in north Wales.

This will be the third year that the concluding round of the FIA World Rally Championship has had its headquarters in Deeside and November's finale will continue to build on the many notable successes of the past 24 months.

While we are delighted that these achievements have been recognised recently with the award of the coveted Best Event (Large) accolade at the National Tourism Awards for Wales 2015, we are far from resting on our laurels. As a result, we are confident this year's Wales Rally GB will be the best yet.

For starters, the competitive route for 2015 sees the re-introduction of the famous Myherin and iconic Great Orme stages last seen in 2013. The former is always a great favourite with competitors while the latter provides one of the most stunning backdrops on the globe-trotting WRC calendar.

As tradition dictates the majority of the thrilling timed sections are set on some of the world's finest gravel tracks in the awe-inspiring Welsh forests. Adding to the challenge and spectacle, two of these epic stages will be held after sunset on Saturday.

The dramatic high-speed action then blasts off early Friday morning on familiar Wales Rally GB territory in mid-Wales. There are double runs through the well-known Hafren, Sweet Lamb and Myherin stages, either side of a lunchtime regroup on the busy streets of central Newtown.

Saturday offers an even longer and more challenging day starting with back-to-back runs through the classic Gartheiniog and Dyfi forests to the north of Machynlleth. The route returns to Deeside via the fast and tricky Dyfnant and Aberhirnant stages and the well-established, family-friendly RallyFest at Chirk Castle. After a short service, the intrepid crews then set out for a second run through both Dyfnant and Aberhirnant, this time under cover of darkness.

Sunday is a shorter – but no less spectacular – day set entirely in north Wales. The Brenig and Alwen stages introduced last year both feature again, with the second run through Brenig being Wales Rally GB's concluding powerstage. In-between comes the wonderful test around the Great Orme.

This year's Ceremonial Finish and prize-giving have been relocated to the Service Park at Deeside, ensuring that celebrations can take place among the teams and fans to create a memorable finale to the 2015 WRC season.

It all adds up to 19 Special Stages and 310 kms (192 miles) of fiercely fought competition for what we are certain will be a brilliant conclusion to this year's

FIA World Rally Championship.

**Dates and data:**

FIA World Rally Championship round 13/13

WRC – WRC2 – WRC3 – JWRC

Date: November 12-15, 2015

Based: Deeside, Flintshire

Service: Deeside, Flintshire

Stages: 19

Competitive distance: 310.15km (192.72 miles)

Liaison distance: 1159.14km (720.28 miles)

Total distance: 1469.29km (913.01 miles)

Longest stage: Hafren (SS1/4) 32.14km (19.97 miles)

Shorest stage: Sweet Lamb (SS2/5) 3.33km (2.06 miles)

Currency: British pound

Time difference: CET-1

Language: English

British population: 64 million

Capital: London

Sunrise: 0730

Sunset: 1630

**Shakedown:**

Shakedown is a 3.32km (2.06 miles) stage in Clocaenog forest, situated 44km (27 miles) from the service park. A remote service zone will run in Ruthin, 10km (six miles) from Deeside. P1 and P2 drivers' shakedown runs from 0800-0930, remaining priority drivers run from 0930-1100 and non-priority drivers 1100-1230

**Itinerary:**

Thursday November 12

Ceremonial start, Llandudno 1830

Friday November 13

SS1 Hafren 1 32.14km (19.97 miles) 0927

SS2 Sweet Lamb 1 3.33km (2.06 miles) 1010

SS3 Myherin 1 30.23km (18.78m miles) 1027

Tyre fitting zone Newtown 1156

SS4 Hafren 2 32.14km (19.97 miles) 1329

SS5 Sweet Lamb 2 3.33km (2.06 miles) 1412

SS6 Myherin 2 30.23km (18.78m miles) 1429

Service Deeside 1748

Saturday November 14

SS7 Gartheiniog 1 11.34km (7.04 miles) 0729

SS8 Dyfi 1 25.86km (16.06 miles) 0756

Regroup Corris 0841

SS9 Gartheiniog 2 11.34km (7.04 miles) 0938

SS10 Dyfi 2 25.86km (16.06 miles) 1005  
SS11 Dyfnant 1 19.02km (11.81 miles) 1153  
SS12 Aberhircnant 1 13.81km (8.64 miles) 1251  
SS13 Chirk 2.06km (1.28 miles) 1431  
Service Deeside 1532  
SS14 Dyfnant 2 19.02km (11.81 miles) 1825  
SS15 Aberhircnant 2 13.81km (8.64 miles) 1923  
Service Deeside 2107

Sunday November 15

SS16 Brenig 1 10.64km (6.61 miles) 0826  
SS17 Alwen 10.41km (6.46 miles) 0852  
SS18 Great Orme 4.74km (2.94 miles) 1020  
Regroup Llandudno 1031  
SS19 Brenig 2 10.64km (6.61 miles) 1208  
Finish Deeside 1351

### **Changes from last year:**

Only the Chirk Castle stage remains completely unchanged from last year, although Brenig gets just a minor tweak, moving the flying finish location slightly. Hafren returns to its full length (last run in 2013) after being split in two last year. Sweet Lamb has 380 metres of new stage at the start and a new finish location. Myherin's back after missing a year and has just over three kilometres of new road in the middle. Gartheiniog has been shortened slightly with a new finish location, while just over the road, Dyfi has had an extra four-kilometre loop added. Dyfnant has 400 metres of new road in the middle and a new finish. Dyfnant and Aberhircnant both run in the opposite direction from last year, but the same as 2013. Alwen is reversed from 12 months ago. The Great Orme returns to the schedule and runs in the same format as when it was the opening stage in 2011.

### **Last year...**

Sébastien Ogier clinched his second successive victory on Wales Rally GB with another inch-perfect drive down roads and in conditions where the Frenchman felt increasingly at home. He hadn't looked quite so comfortable at the end of day one, when team-mate Jari-Matti Latvala was only half a dozen seconds adrift. But when the Finn locked up, stalled and dropped into a Clocaenog ditch for three minutes on Saturday morning, the French flyer was in the clear. The scrap for second place was a stunner as Citroën's Kris Meeke and retiring M-Sport star Mikko Hirvonen went head to head for the second step of the podium. Former Wales winner Hirvonen said an emotional goodbye to world championship rallying in the runners-up spot after the Northern Irishman went off the road and suffered two punctures in Brenig – but not before he'd brought a nation of rally fans back to the edge of their seats. Meeke slipped to sixth, with his fellow Citroën driver Mads Østberg the chief beneficiary, moving up to third place.

**Result:** 1 Sébastien Ogier/Julien Ingrassia (Volkswagen Polo R WRC)  
3h03m08.2s; 2 Mikko Hirvonen/Jarmo Lehtinen (Ford Fiesta RS WRC) +37.6s;  
3 Mads Østberg/Jonas Andersson (DS 3 WRC) +1m03.6s

**Top 10 running order (day one):**

1 1 Sébastien Ogier/Julien Ingrassia (Volkswagen Polo R WRC)  
2 2 Jari-Matti Latvala/Miikka Anttila (Volkswagen Polo R WRC)  
3 9 Andreas Mikkelsen/Ola Fløene (Volkswagen Polo R WRC)  
4 4 Mads Østberg/Jonas Andersson (Citroën DS 3 WRC)  
5 3 Kris Meeke/Paul Nagle (Citroën DS 3 WRC)  
6 20 Thierry Neuville/Nicolas Gilsoul (Hyundai i20 WRC)  
7 5 Elfyn Evans/Daniel Barritt (Ford Fiesta RS WRC)  
8 7 Dani Sordo/Marc Marti (Hyundai i20 WRC)  
9 8 Hayden Paddon/John Kennar (Hyundai i20 WRC)  
10 6 Ott Tanak/Raigo Molder (Ford Fiesta RS WRC)

**Championship positions...**

1 Ogier 238 points; 2 Latvala 180; 3 Mikkelsen 154; 4 Østberg 110; 5 Meeke 94; 6 Neuville 90.

**Leading WRC2 runners:**

33 Eyvind Brynildsen/Anders Fredriksson (Škoda Fabia R50)  
34 Quentin Giordano/Valentin Sarreaud (DS 3 R5)  
38 Yurii Protasov/Pavlo Cherepin (Ford Fiesta RRC)  
39 Abdulaziz Al-Kuwari/Marshall Clarke (Ford Fiesta RRC)  
43 Eric Camilli/Benjamin Veillas (Ford Fiesta R5)  
45 Craig Breen/Scott Martin (Peugeot 208 T16)  
46 Tom Cave/Craig Parry (Ford Fiesta R5)  
71 Fredrik Ahlin/Morten Abrahamsen (Ford Fiesta R5)

**WRC2 positions...**

1 Al-Attiyah\* 112 points; 2 Protasov 90; 3 Lappi 88; 4 Tidemand 86; 5 Al-Kuwari 76; 6 Ketomaa 67

*Scoring from 6 of their first 7 registered rallies*

\*Crowned champion on previous round, Rally de España

**Leading Junior WRC runners (all driving DS 3 R3-Max):**

52 Simone Tempestini/Matteo Chiarocci  
53 Ole Christian Veiby/Anders Jaeger  
55 Mohammed Al Mutawaa/Stephen McAuley  
58 Terry Folb/Franck Le Floch  
60 Quentin Gilbert/Renaud Jamoul  
65 Pierre-Louis Loubet/Vincent Landais  
67 Dean Rafferty/Arthur Kierans  
78 Chris Ingram/Gabin Moreau

**Junior WRC positions...**

1 Gilbert\* 131pts; 2 Tempestini 62; 3 Veiby 58; 4 Henri Haapamaki 48; 5 Folb 48; 6 Jean-Rene Perry 32.

*Best score on 6 from 7 rallies*

\*Crowned champion on previous round, Rally de España

**Leading WRC3 runners:**

- 52 Simone Tempestini/Matteo Chiarcossi (DS 3 R3-Max)
- 53 Ole Christian Veiby/Anders Jaeger (DS 3 R3-Max)
- 55 Mohammed Al Mutawaa/Stephen McAuley (DS 3 R3-Max)
- 58 Terry Folb/Franck Le Floch (DS 3 R3-Max)
- 60 Quentin Gilbert/Renaud Jamoul (DS 3 R3-Max)
- 65 Pierre-Louis Loubet/Vincent Landais (DS 3 R3-Max)
- 67 Dean Rafferty/Arthur Kierans (DS 3 R3-Max)
- 69 Damiano De Tommaso/Massimiliano Bosi (Peugeot 208 R2)
- 78 Chris Ingram/Gabin Moreau (DS 3 R3-Max)
- 80 Fabio Andolfi/Simone Scattolin (Peugeot 208 R2)

**WRC3 positions...**

1 Gilbert 100pts; 2 Tempestini 81; 3 Andre Crugnola 70; 4 Veiby 67; 5 Henri Haapamaki 48; 6 Andolfi 41.

*Scoring from 6 of their first 7 registered rallies*

**Tunnock's key stage:**

Aberhirnant 2 (SS15 19.80km – 12.30 miles).

The dark second running of the test close to Bala lake will be a real challenge to the crews, coming at the end of one of the longest days of the season. The super-quick section in the middle of this one will really sort the men from the boys – and show who's been eating their carrots.

**Weather with you:**

Sunshine and cloud on Thursday before what looks like being a fairly damp event. We're not expecting torrential rain, but the sun's not likely to be the most frequent of visitors either. Temperatures fluctuating between seven and 12 degrees.

**The media week:**

Tuesday November 10

1400-1800 accreditation open

Wednesday November 11

1000-1600 accreditation open

0800-2000 media centre open

1930 M-Sport Happy Hour (service park)

Thursday November 12

0800-1800 accreditation open

0700-2200 media centre open

0800-1230 shakedown

1400 FIA pre-event press conference (media centre)

1700 autograph session, Llandudno

1830 rally start, Llandudno

Friday November 13  
0700-2200 media centre open  
1800 (approx) meet the top-three crews (service park)

Saturday November 14  
0700-2300 media centre open  
2130 (approx) meet the top-three crews (service park)

Sunday November 15  
0700-1900 media centre open  
1415 podium finish ceremony, Deeside  
1500 FIA post-event press conference (media centre)  
1730 provisional final classification published

### **Tunnock's Restaurant recommendation:**

Chester Grosvenor, Eastgate (+44 1244 324024). It's pretty pricey and a bit swish, but it's the end of the season, so why not? Book early though, does get booked up. If that's a bit much, try the Starbucks or Subway on the road out of service. Don't forget, the red cups have arrived in Starbucks; Christmas is coming...

### **Wales Rally GB (née the RAC Rally)... a potted history**

First run in 1932 as a series of speed tests and time trials, the most significant step forward for the RAC Rally (as it was known until 1997) came in 1960, when it mirrored Scandinavian events of the day and moved its competitive element into the forests. The first ever stage was Monument Hill in Argyll, Scotland. Erik Carlsson was quickest in a Saab 96 and went on to win the event.

A round of the World Rally Championship since 1973, the event routinely moved its base around the country, starting from as far south as Bournemouth and Brighton and as far north as Harrogate and York – while incorporating such legendary forests as Kielder, Grizedale and Dalby. Since 2000 the event has remained in Wales, calling Cardiff home until 2012 when it moved north in the principality to Deeside, just a kilometre or two over the English-Welsh border from Chester, where Colin McRae was crowned 1995 World Rally Champion. A recent change of management has given the event a new lease of life – and a further funding extension to keep Rally GB in Wales until the end of 2018.

### **Recent winners Wales Rally GB:**

2005: Petter Solberg/Phil Mills (Subaru Impreza WRC2005)  
2006: Marcus Gröholm/Timo Rautiainen (Ford Focus RS WRC 06)  
2007: Mikko Hirvonen/Jarmo Lehtinen (Ford Focus RS WRC 07)  
2008: Sébastien Loeb/Daniel Elena (Citroën C4 WRC)  
2009: Sébastien Loeb/Daniel Elena (Citroën C4 WRC)  
2010: Sébastien Loeb/Daniel Elena (Citroën 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)

**Most successful driver on Britain's round of the WRC:**

Petter Solberg, Hannu Mikkola (4 wins)

**Stuart Loudon says...**

"I might be biased, but I have to admit that Wales Rally GB – my home round of the World Rally Championship – really does provide some of the best roads of the season. These are absolute classics and I'm really disappointed not to be competing on the event again. I wouldn't miss a run through these woods lightly, there is a reason I'm not out there this week... trust me!

"I have competed in Wales three times in the last four years and with three different drivers. Last year I was doing the national event with former England cricketer Graeme Swann. I must admit, that was quite an experience! We rolled early in the event, but carried on and, by the finish, he was driving a rally car far better than I could manage an offspinner!

"The key to Wales is the weather. If the rain comes then it will change the nature of the roads and grip levels significantly, but if the fog comes then it brings a rather more fundamental change – it means you simply can't see anything. When you're competing in the fog, your reliance on accurate pacenotes goes up another level. It's a real test of confidence in the car.

"I can't believe another season has passed and another supremely successful year for Volkswagen. We have to take our hats off to what Sébastien Ogier, Julien Ingrassia and everybody in that team continues to achieve. Next year, I'm hoping to be around the WRC a bit more regularly.

"Watch this space..."

**Stuart Loudon** is a semi-professional co-driver who has started 52 rallies, 18 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.

*Pictures courtesy of Red Bull Media House/Volkswagen Motorsport*

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