



FEDERATION INTERNATIONALE DE L'AUTOMOBILE

Press Release

2010 PIRELLI STAR DRIVER RALLY OF TURKEY REPORT

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The second year of the Pirelli Star Driver programme got underway on this week's Rally of Turkey, with all of the drivers turning in encouraging times and New Zealand's Hayden Paddon finishing highest of the five crews in the overall classification. Estonian driver Ott Tänak had set the pace for the first two days of the event, before crashing heavily on the final morning after running in the top 10 overall for the duration of the rally.

Pirelli Star Driver report

Hayden Paddon might have been the highest finisher on the event, but going off the road on the opening stage of the rally forced him to use SuperRally to return on Saturday morning. Three other drivers retired from Friday: Alex Raschi, Nick Georgiou and Peter Horsey. Horsey's departure was the only terminal one after his Mitsubishi was destroyed in a second-stage fire.

The sole survivor of what had been an exceptionally tough first loop of stages close to the rally's Istanbul base was Tänak. The protégé of five-time world rally winner Markko Martin admitted he had taken a measured approach to the first day, and continued that policy into Saturday, only to be caught out by a fast right-hander over a crest on SS20. He rolled his Lancer and was unable to continue.

Once he was back on the stages, Paddon's focus for Saturday was on bedding himself in to the new car and making up for the seat time he'd missed on the previous day. By the day's third stage, Paddon was beating the times of Tänak, despite a damaged wheel rim forcing a brake calliper to catch on the disc. By the end of the event, Paddon had overcome his Friday disappointment and was delighted with the feeling and speed he was enjoying from the Mitsubishi.

Raschi finished the event close to Paddon. The San Marino driver had made it one stage further into the rally before he went off the road on SS2. He returned, only to suffer damaged suspension on the Riva test late on Saturday morning. The car was fixed and he made it to the end of the event without any more problems. Lebanese driver Nick Georgiou was the most unfortunate of the Pirelli Star Drivers, however, after a bearing failure ruled him out of day one before he even arrived at the start of the opening stage. Georgiou returned to the service park not having tackled a single kilometre competitively. His rally started the next morning, when he elected to take a sensible approach to learn the car rather than trying to set fastest stage times in the Group N category. By the final day, Georgiou was pleased with his progress, calling the Ballica test the best he'd ever driven.

Horsey's car didn't make it past the second stage. He rolled the car in a slow right-hander. The accident itself didn't cost too much time, but the fire which started soon after – and was suspected to have been started by an oil leak – took hold and burned the car out, despite the best efforts of Horsey and co-driver Moses Matovu.

The drivers

Car 36: Nick Georgiou/Joseph Matar

Nick Georgiou said: "The event didn't get off to the best of starts for us. We were on the road section to the first stage when I felt the power steering tighten up, then I saw the battery light coming on and finally the engine temperature started to rise. We switched the engine off and our fears were confirmed when we saw a bearing had broken. Of course, I was disappointed,

but at the same time it wasn't as bad as having it happen in the middle of the stage – the adrenalin wasn't flowing, so the emotion wasn't quite the same. This is rallying, it can happen. It was an easy fix for the team and we were able to get out and start our rally on Saturday morning. When we did get started, it really wasn't the easiest of conditions – we were running the gravel tyre on wet asphalt stages. We stepped the pace up a bit in the afternoon on Saturday and then again on Sunday. The Ballica stage was just something else, it was incredible. People tell me it's a taste of Finland – if that's the case, I can't wait to get there. It was just awesome with the jumps. I loved it. I'm pretty happy leaving this event, okay, it wasn't the best start, but I know where I am with the car now. The others have taken a little time out of me, but I know where that time is and I know what I've got to do.”

Car 37: Peter Horsey/Moses Matovu

Peter Horsey said: “What a start to a rally! I can still hardly take in what has happened. Everything was good on the first stage, but then not far into the second stage we went into a right-hander over a brow. The back of the car stepped out, I was just slightly too fast in. The rear got caught in some ruts from the cars which had passed through earlier and it rolled over. It wasn't a bad roll or anything, it was first gear – a real slow one. Back on our wheels, we got going and had gone about a kilometre or something like that down the road when I saw smoke coming through the bonnet vents. We stopped and used our extinguishers to put the fire out. It looked like it had gone, but because it was an oil fire, it just kept coming back. One of the cars stopped and we took his extinguisher, but we couldn't stop it. The fire truck came after 15 minutes, but it was an inferno by then. I'm absolutely gutted to end the first event like this. Moses and I have had much bigger crashes than this one, with nothing like the consequences. You feel so completely helpless when you are standing watching the car burning. It's tough because we wanted time in the car and we wanted a result from the first event – we didn't just want the result for us, but for the FIA, Pirelli and the continent of Africa that we're here representing.”

Car 38: Hayden Paddon/John Kennard

Hayden Paddon said: “Like some of our team-mates, we had a tough start to the event. We came over a crest in the first stage, flat out and found the road blocked by a chicane. The chicane had been in the road book, but we hadn't noticed it. We thought the chicane in the road book was actually 50 metres further down the road than where it was. Okay, we still wouldn't have had it noted, but we would have had a much better chance of stopping the car before we hit it. As it was, the car rode up onto the dirt and got beached. It wouldn't move. It's very frustrating, but John and I have put another process in place to deal with that from the next rally on. From then on, the rally was about me feeling comfortable with the car – making it like a glove. I really got that feeling on the final stage of Saturday and it was great. We made some small adjustments to the dampers during the event, the car was a little bit tail-happy on the first run through some of the stages. I was a bit disappointed the stages were cancelled on Sunday morning, having missed Friday I wanted to be doing as much driving as possible. I feel really comfortable with the car now. It's a real shame what happened to Ott; after the morning we had on Friday, his times were a real lift for the whole team. But, this is rallying and this kind of thing can happen.”

Car 39: Alex Raschi/Rudy Pollet

Alex Raschi said: “I had a problem on the second stage. I tried to turn in a right-hand corner, but there was some gravel on the inside of the bend. This sent the car sliding and the back hit a bank and rode up it. The car became stuck, we just couldn't move it. I tried to reverse the car, but this broke the reverse gear in the transmission. There were no spectators around and with just Rudy and myself it was too tough to try and get it moved. It was very frustrating, when we did get the car out, after the stage had run, there was no damage to it at all and we could drive it back to service. The team fixed the gearbox overnight and we started again on Saturday. That day was going better until we found the really rough stage at the end of the morning. That road was crazy, it was just bang, bang, bang all of the time. The suspension at the left-rear of the car broke. Again, the team did a great job to get the car all sorted out and we enjoyed the afternoon. When we got to the rough stage again [Riva, SS17] I was driving more slowly, worried about how it might hurt the car again. I am happy, though. On Saturday and Sunday I have got a lot of experience of the car and of rallying in some new conditions – and that's why I'm here. The car has been beautiful and the tyres have been perfect for me. We were quite close with Hayden in the final day and maybe we could have had a fight, but we knew we had to take the car to the finish, that was really important for the team.”

Car 40: Ott Tänak/Kuldar Sikk

Ott Tänak said: “The first day was good, no problems. I wasn't pushing too hard, maybe 70 or 80 per cent. I didn't want to take any big risks with this being my first time with the team and

my first time competing in the car. I enjoyed the roads, they were nice and fast – but the World Rally Cars were pulling out so many big rocks, it was quite difficult to stay on the line for a lot of the time. It was the same on Saturday, but there were some bigger rocks. We had a problem with a damper on one stage, but the team got all of that sorted. It should have been a straightforward day for me on Sunday: we had a good lead and no problems at all with the car. My plan was just to drive the car and not take any risks. Unfortunately, we went off the road on a fast right-hand corner over a crest. It was quite a big accident and a very big disappointment for me. I am disappointed not just for me and Kuldar, but also for the whole team and for Pirelli and the FIA. We were looking to have a very good result here.”

The other quotes

Phil Short, Pirelli Star Driver Supervisor:

“This rally hasn’t been particularly kind to us; it’s been a very tough event. One of the positives to come from this is the reliability shown from the Mitsubishi Lancers. We only had one technical problem which was not caused by the drivers hitting something; the power steering problem for Nick’s car on Friday. This shows the work the team has done over the winter is really paying off. The crews like the feeling of the car, the set-up is good. On the really rough sections on Saturday, the drivers said how well it worked. I think we’ve been quite unlucky on this event. Another positive for us was the pace which Ott showed. He drove very well, looked after the car and seemed to be heading for a great result until he went off the road. We’ll be in the drivers’ ears again before Portugal. Right from the first words we said at pre-season training in Edinburgh, the message has been to finish rallies and get experience. Clearly when you are using SupeRally you’re not driving the car and you’re not getting experience. There has been no pressure from Pirelli to drive for a result and we will reiterate that message ahead of the next rally.”

Mario Isola, Pirelli Motorsport Manager:

“It’s been a mixed rally. Friday morning was very difficult, but after that we have seen some good speed from all of the drivers. [Ott] Tänak was going really well and his speed was fantastic, he was the best here for sure, but we have to find out about his crash. We need to talk about this because there was no need for him to be taking the risk – he didn’t have any pressure from behind and no chance to win the place ahead. His result could have been incredible for the first round of the Pirelli Star Driver. For sure, the reliability of the car has improved a lot since last year. Now, the drivers need to realise that they have to finish the event, it’s so important to get there. Now we have to look at the next event and Ralliart Italia has a lot of work before that rally. For sure, the car of Peter Horsey is gone, it’s finished – the fire was so bad, only the roll cage is still there. And we have to look at Tänak’s car. We didn’t plan to have two cars completely destroyed like this. The team has one spare car and we need to work out what we can do, but certainly it’s not going to be straightforward for the next rally.”

The next event

After an opening round with all the competitive action running in Asia, the Pirelli Star Drivers will return to the other side of the Bosphorus and head out to the far western side of Europe for their second event: the Vodafone Rally de Portugal (27-30 May). As usual, the popular gravel event is based in the Algarve Stadium (where two super special stages will run) and includes 18 stages in total. On the Sunday (23 May) prior to the event, all five Pirelli Star Drivers will take part in a super special stage in Porto, as part of a road-show to publicise the event in the north of the country.

The results

26th Hayden Paddon (NZ)/John Kennard (NZ) 4 hr 06min 27.1s (7th in Group N4)*

27th Alex Raschi (RSM)/Rudy Pollet (I) 4hr 07min 23.4s (8th in Group N4)*

29th Nick Georgiou (LBN)/Joseph Matar (LBN) 4h17m00.6s (10th in Group N4)*

Ott Tänak (EST)/Kuldar Sikk (EST) Accident SS20, retired

Peter Horsey (KEN)/Moses Matovu (UGA) Accident/fire SS2, retired

* Continued under SupeRally regulations

Media links:

Click below to download images of the five Pirelli Star Drivers on the Rally of Turkey.

- Launch shot 1: Pirelli Star Drivers & Cars - click [here](#)
- Launch shot 2: Pirelli Star Drivers & Cars - click [here](#)
- Hayden Paddon - click [here](#)
- Alex Raschi - click [here](#)
- Nick Georgiou - click [here](#)
- Ott Tänak - click [here](#)
- Peter Horsey - click [here](#)

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