



FEDERATION INTERNATIONALE DE L'AUTOMOBILE

Press Release

2010 PIRELLI STAR DRIVER RALLY DE PORTUGAL

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The Pirelli Star Driver programme moved on to the Vodafone Rally of Portugal this week, where all five crews made good progress on the hot and dusty stages inland from the event's Faro base. Four of the five Mitsubishi Lancer Evolution Xs made it to the finish at the Algarve Stadium this afternoon (Sunday), with only Ott Tänak failing to get through the final test. The Estonian driver had set the pace through the first two days on this second of six World Rally Championship outings for the young drivers. Unfortunately for Tänak, he hit a bank and retired this morning, leaving Hayden Paddon to finish as the highest classified Pirelli Star Driver.

As well as competing on one of the best-supported rallies in Europe, all 10 of the drivers and co-drivers underwent further performance testing with training company ESP. The physiology and conditioning of the drivers was the focus in Portugal.

Pirelli Star Driver report

Keen to demonstrate he was unmoved by the final-day Rally of Turkey crash which prevented him from taking what would have been an exceptional eighth place overall on the opening event in the Pirelli Star Driver programme, Ott Tänak set the pace among the conventional Group N cars from the first stage proper. By the end of the opening day, Tänak was 23 seconds ahead of the second closest non-Super 2000 Group N car – the Mitsubishi of local hero and reigning FIA Production Car World Rally Champion Armindo Araújo. At the end of day two, he had doubled that advantage and moved into 14th place overall. Unfortunately for Tänak and his co-driver Kuldar Sikk, he would fall foul on the final morning for a second event in succession. He hit a bank in SS15 and retired in the stage.

In a repeat of the Rally of Turkey result, New Zealander Hayden Paddon bounced back from a SupeRally return on Saturday to end the event as top Pirelli Star Driver. Paddon suffered damaged steering on SS7 after hitting a rock, leaving him with a five-minute penalty for not completing the test. Paddon's day had, however, already taken a down turn when a precautionary gearbox change took longer than expected at the mid-day service. He left Faro bound for the afternoon's re-run stages with a two-minute penalty. Through the weekend, Paddon's event ran without any major incident, allowing him to improve his times and spend valuable time at the wheel of the Lancer Evolution X.

Alex Raschi (San Marino) suffered a similar fate to Paddon in the second run through Almodovar on Saturday afternoon. He clouted a rock and also damaged the steering on his Mitsubishi, forcing him into retirement and out of 26th overall. Raschi drove a sensible final day to end the event 30th.

Nick Georgiou (Lebanon) and Peter Horsey (Kenya) made up for using SupeRally on the Rally of Turkey by driving the complete route on this event. The pair ended the Rally of Portugal 33rd and 35th respectively.

Prior to the start of the Vodafone Rally de Portugal, all five of the Pirelli Star Drivers attended the rally's promotional road show in Porto (23 May). The drivers joined the world's rally stars - including six times FIA World Rally Champion Sebastien Loeb and former Formula 1 World Champion Kimi Raikkonen - to complete demonstration runs through the centre of Portugal's second city in front of a 40,000-strong crowd. Once the event proper got underway, it was

ahead of another big crowd - this time in the Algarve Stadium, which once again proved a popular venue for the super special stages which bookended the event. The crews arrived in the stadium full of good advice after BP Ford Abu Dhabi World Rally Team Principal Malcolm Wilson sat down with them on Thursday afternoon to talk through the most important aspects of running a team at the highest level and what he looked for from a driver and co-driver.

The drivers

Car 36: Nick Georgiou/Joseph Matar

Nick Georgiou said: "We heard some noise from the gearbox on the first morning, so the team changed it for the afternoon loop. Otherwise it was good. We had no major problems and really enjoyed driving the roads. Obviously this is a new challenge for me, we haven't been here and competed on this rally – or this style of rally before – so getting to the end of the route was what we needed to do. It's all about experience and getting as much seat time as we possibly can. The roads have been quite tough, especially the second time through – and this certainly wasn't an easy rally to come and learn. But it's been a great event with a lot of support."

Car 37: Peter Horsey/Moses Matovu

Peter Horsey said: "I came to this event with a finish being my number one priority. After only driving one stage in Turkey, it was vital that we got more time in the car here in Portugal. That strategy was reflected in the pace we drove. Of course, it would have been nice to have gone on and pushed as hard as we could, but we simply couldn't risk not getting to the end; where we could and where we were confident we did push, but we were quite safe with some pace in reserve most of the time. The roads were tricky, but really good to rally on. We were making some changes to the notes on the first run through and then second time through some of the stages were quite rough with some big rocks around. It was great to drive in the stadium where there were so many people. Having heard about the atmosphere on the Rally de Portugal, it was great to sample it first-hand. The car ran very well throughout this event. The only problem we had was on Saturday afternoon, when we had a small issue with the intercom. Luckily the problem was from my side and I could hear Moses, but not talk back to him. It was like this for a couple of stages. I was able to make some hand gestures if I needed the notes a bit quicker or something like that, but it wasn't a big deal."

Car 38: Hayden Paddon/John Kennard

Hayden Paddon said: "On the whole this was a good rally where we showed, what I feel, was pretty good pace for our first time on these roads. The chances of getting a result were spoiled a bit when we got the penalties on Friday afternoon. The team did a great job getting the gearbox changed; we knew it was going to take longer than the time we were allowed. The problem with the gearbox came on the final stage on Friday morning; we'd had a rear puncture for the last few kilometres of the stage and I think this might have caused the problem. These Pirelli tyres are so well constructed that when you have a puncture it's not immediately obvious this is what's happening; you can lose pretty much all of the air from the tyre, but the sidewall is so strong the tyre stays up. Anyway, we only had fourth and fifth gear for the last three kilometres of SS4, but we got through. In the afternoon, we hit a rock which was right on the line in the last stage. This broke the steering and left us stranded. It was pretty much impossible to miss the rock. We were committed to the corner and if we'd tried to avoid the rock we'd have hit a post on one side or a tree on the other side of the rock. It was bad luck. The weekend was good, though. We got a clean run, apart from when I turned left at a right-hand junction on Saturday. We dropped about 15 seconds reversing and getting going the right way. The thing which this event has highlighted for me is the need to reduce the amount of information I'm trying to pack into my pace notes – there's just too much of it. John [Kennard, co-driver] is starting to talk at the start of the stage and it's just non-stop. This has been a really technical rally, so it's probably where it has been at its worst, but it's something I need to sort out."

Car 39: Alex Raschi/Rudy Pollet

Alex Raschi said: "I like this rally! Okay, I didn't like so much when I hit the rock and retired from Saturday with some damage to the steering, but apart from that it was very nice and some beautiful roads. We had a little problem in the car - my co-driver Rudy was losing his voice from the start. He sounded quite strange when I heard him, and with the noise from the rocks in the bottom of the car, it wasn't always easy to make out what he was saying. With so many corners hiding behind the blind crests, this was tough for me. When you're not exactly sure what your co-driver is telling you is over the top of the crest, you can't commit completely to it – we certainly lost some seconds because of this. I made some good kilometres on this

rally, but next time I really do want to get through without needing to use the SuperRally.”

Car 40: Ott Tänak/Kuldar Sikk

Ott Tänak said: “Obviously, I am really disappointed with what has happened on this event. I had a little bit of experience from this rally after I came here last year. I started out with a set of notes I made in 2009, but we decided to start making fresh notes again. I found a good pace with the car early in the rally and then stuck with it. It was an interesting fight with Armindo Araújo and, I have to say, I hadn’t been so sure whether I would be able to be with him after he has so much experience on this rally – and I was really keen to see the finish of the event after I had the accident in Turkey. When it came to the start of this event, I didn’t think to the accident at all. I knew what had happened there and it was a mis-communication between my co-driver and I, and then we moved on. The speed was good for me from the start of the rally, without making any risks. The car worked well all the time, we had a small knocking noise from the front suspension on Saturday, but that went when the team changed the dampers at service. After that, we were driving sensibly and staying ahead of Armindo. What happened this morning was really not good – I am not happy and sorry for the team who had worked so hard to get us to the event. I hit a bank in stage number 15 with the rear of the car first, this pulled the front of the car around and we hit the bank again. We retired; it was not possible to carry on. I’m so disappointed; we had another good result coming.”

The other quotes

Phil Short, Pirelli Star Driver Supervisor

“This has been a very positive rally for the Pirelli Star Driver programme. After a difficult first event in Turkey we had made it quite clear to the five crews that we placed a great deal of importance on getting the cars to the finish – getting miles in the car is important for these drivers. Ott was setting some very good times through the first two days of the event. Once again he has demonstrated his ability as a driver and what he is capable of in the stages. But, once again, he has come unstuck on day three and spoiled what was going to be another good result. This is an aspect of his driving he needs to concentrate on. I spoke to him on the final morning and he said he wasn’t pushing or sticking his neck out. We knew that Armindo [Araújo] had given up on catching him. I actually sent him a text saying: “Please concentrate, no risks,” just before SS15. It’s very disappointing. But nobody is more disappointed than Ott himself. Hayden and Alex also set some very good times, but both suffered damaged steering when they hit rocks in the road. Rocks being exposed by crews running ahead is a feature of this rally, and I do think they were a little unlucky arriving in corners where they couldn’t alter their line. Both drivers returned and set consistent times. Peter and Nick have had a steady event getting used to their cars. I think it has come as a bit of a shock to the guys how technical this rally is. You can sit at home and watch the in-car video of the route and think: “Yes, that’s a really nice fast and flowing event with some smooth roads,” but the actual experience can be quite different – and they have seen that for themselves. The drivers have all built their experience in the car on this rally, which is really important going forward to the next event. I think it’s important again to mention the job Ralliart Italia did in getting all of the cars to the start of the event, they really worked around the clock to make it happen.”

Matteo Braga, Pirelli Motorsport senior tyre engineer

“All five of the drivers have shown lots of potential and gained some very valuable experience on this week’s Rally de Portugal, which is the most important thing about the Pirelli Star Driver programme. Ott Tänak again proved to be very fast but he needs to be more consistent and finish a rally, which I am sure will happen soon. But for all the drivers this was a very tough rally so we have to be pleased with their achievements.”

The results

20th Hayden Paddon (NZ)/John Kennard (NZ) 4hr 27 min 33.1sec (9th in Group N)*
30th Alex Raschi (RSM)/Rudy Pollet (I) 4hr 36 min 18.0sec (16th in Group N)*
33rd Nick Georgiou (LBN)/Joseph Matar (LBN) 4hr 41 min 38.8sec (17th in Group N)
35th Peter Horsey (KEN)/Moses Matovu (UGA) 4 hr 44 min 46.9sec (19th in Group N)
Ott Tänak (EST)/Kuldar Sikk (EST) Accident SS15

* Continued under SuperRally regulations

The next event

Neste Oil Rally Finland (29-31 July) is one of the world’s most famous motorsport events – and probably the most eagerly anticipated rally of the season for the five young drivers. The

Jyvaskyla-based rally is all about the speed and bravery of drivers. Unflinching commitment is required to hold the throttle wide open as they fly over blind crests at close to 200kph. Getting this event right could deliver a career-making class win, getting it wrong will almost certainly mean ending the rally in the trees. The itinerary for the event has been tweaked for this season, with the usual three days of rally action packed into a Friday-Saturday format for the first time. The event might be a day shorter than usual, but the flat-out action will be just as exciting as ever.

Media links:

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

- Hayden Paddon - click [here](#)
- Alex Raschi - click [here](#)
- Nick Georgiou - click [here](#)
- Ott Tänak - click [here](#)
- Peter Horsey - click [here](#)
- Pirelli Star Drivers & Malcolm Wilson - click [here](#)

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