



FEDERATION INTERNATIONALE DE L'AUTOMOBILE

Press Release

2010 PIRELLI STAR DRIVER RALLYE DEUTSCHLAND REPORT

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New Zealand driver Hayden Paddon turned in an exceptional performance on Rallye Deutschland, which ended in Trier this afternoon, to clinch second place on the latest round of the FIA Production Car World Rally Championship. The Kiwi was comfortably the fastest and most consistent of the Pirelli Star Drivers.

Paddon's result, which means he has taken three consecutive PWRC podiums in his rookie season in the series, was all the more astonishing considering he had never competed on an asphalt rally. The Mitsubishi Lancer driver had employed the services of a driver coach while staying in Britain prior to the start of Rallye Deutschland, but beyond that all of his experience in the sport had come on gravel roads and loose surface stages. From the start of the event, Paddon was on the pace, posting the second fastest time on the second stage. He moved into second position in the PWRC standings on SS4 and never dropped lower than the runners-up spot. And he threatened to go one better by maintaining the pressure on reigning Production Car World Rally Champion Armindo Araújo, who eventually won the category.

By the end of the opening day, Paddon and co-driver John Kennard, had collected their first fastest PWRC time outside of New Zealand – and the pair would go on to add more and more scratch times as they settled down to the sealed surface. Paddon was delighted to end the event with second place, a result which keeps him firmly in the race for this year's PWRC title. He is third in the standings after three rounds.

As usual, Estonian driver Ott Tänak was at the sharp end of the field, but his hopes of a repeat of his Rally Finland PWRC victory were dashed when he cut a fourth-stage hairpin too tightly. The suspension on his Evolution X was damaged and he couldn't continue further into the opening day. Tänak, also an asphalt rally first-timer, admitted the switch from gravel to asphalt was taking him longer than expected to get used to. With his car fixed by the Ralliart Italia mechanics, Tänak returned for the second day – and made the best possible start with fastest time on the Hermeskeil test which opened Saturday. He then spent the next two days keeping the car in the middle of the road and learning as much as possible about driving on asphalt.

Tänak finished the event fifth in the PWRC standings, picking up one place at the expense of his fellow Pirelli Star Driver Alex Raschi who retired on the penultimate stage when his car lost drive. Raschi had been trading times with highly-rated young German Hermann Gassner. While Raschi has experience of driving on asphalt, he found the German style of roads quite different to those he had experienced on the Italian events where he has competed for most of his career. Raschi also found his aggressive style of driving was hard on the soft compound Pirelli tyre, which meant he ran with the hard option through most of the event. Raschi's hopes of collecting PWRC points for the second event in succession were dashed when he hit transmission trouble on the last-but-one stage. He and stand-in co-driver Silvio Stefanelli (a late replacement after Rudy Pollet broke his ankle) retired, unable to make any repairs to the Mitsubishi.

For the second event in succession, Nick Georgiou and Peter Horsey were in a close battle on the final day – starting Sunday morning 45 seconds apart. A strong drive from Georgiou was enough for him to put daylight between his and the sister car of Horsey. Neither driver had enjoyed a clean run through the event, but both picked up PWRC points for finishing seventh and eighth.

The drivers

Car 36: Nick Georgiou/Joseph Matar

Nick Georgiou said: "Generally, I've enjoyed this event – and we haven't gone too badly either. We were lying seventh in Production before we had a problem with the front differential on the 11th stage. I couldn't engage any gears, so we weren't going anywhere. We've had a few things on this rally, with the gearbox going at shakedown; that wasn't the best start, it meant we couldn't do a complete run at shakedown. Fortunately, we'd done a test on the Monday before the start of the rally, so we did some running. This rally was very tricky, for sure the day two stages were the best. The vineyards are the hardest to learn for me. There are so many tight corners and cuts in those stages, and the roads are quite narrow in there as well. On the positive side, we have made good pace notes on this event – they're a step forward from Finland. This was a very different rally from the others, but the long stage was enjoyable. The only problem was that it was hard on the car, the brakes were starting to go towards the end. But, all in all, I'm glad to get through this event; it's more experience for me."

Car 37: Peter Horsey/Calvin Cooledge

Peter Horsey said: "We had our fair share of bad luck on this rally. Having had a fire myself in Turkey, when I arrived on the scene of another car fire on the third stage, I stopped straight away and jumped out with our fire extinguisher. The fire was not to be contained and we all had to move our cars to let the fire engine through. When I was out of the car, I had taken off my crash helmet and put it on the roof, but somebody moved it while I was moving the car and put it on the ground. It was only when we were out of the stage I realised it wasn't in the car. In the heat of the moment, these kinds of things can happen. It was a case of yet more bad luck yesterday. We finished a stage and I took off my crash helmet and put it in the middle of the car while I cooled down after the stage. It looks like the buckle caught the fire extinguisher switch, because the extinguisher was triggered, so we were forced out for the second day. The thing I regret most about that is that we didn't get another chance to go through the Panzerplatte stage, which was a great stage. The road in there was quite wide which helped, but I enjoyed it in there the most. I think it helped that the weather stayed dry all the way through this event, you can see from the surface changes how much more tricky it would be if the weather was changeable. The hardest thing for me was just to get used to driving on asphalt. I'd never done anything like this before, so it was all new. I'm used to gravel and sliding the car around, but there was no skidding anywhere on this event and I'm not very good at handbrake turns which is quite an important requirement for this event. Just trying to get used to it all and work out what was going on was a challenge on this rally."

Car 38: Hayden Paddon/John Kennard

Hayden Paddon said: "This has been an amazing event. I didn't really know what to expect from the rally when we arrived here, but this has been fantastic. I had no real experience of competing on asphalt. I'd done a targa-style event back home in New Zealand, but it was nothing like this. The training I had with Rob Wilson before coming here definitely helped, it got me thinking about everything and it made me question what I thought about competing on asphalt. It was hard to put everything he'd taught me into practice in the heat of the event, but it was great to have had the practice. The car was perfect throughout the rally and the key for me was getting into a rhythm on the stages. That was easier on some than others, but once you got there everything worked well. Scoring our first fastest time outside of New Zealand was great news as well. It was fantastic to be in the middle of a good fight with Armindo [Araújo] and we kept the pressure on him all the way through the event. There was no way we were going to slow down or let up, the gap was quite small sometimes and we had to keep going. We suffered a bit of understeer in some of the vineyard stages, but it was good in Panzerplatte – but incredible the way the grip and surface changed from corner to corner. The more time I was in the car, the more confidence I found with the set-up and the more I was willing to make changes and know that I was making the right changes. I was able to push hard without taking too many unnecessary risks with the car. It was a great experience to compete on such a tough event and to score more good Production points. I'm looking forward to my next event on asphalt in France with the Pirelli Star Driver programme."

Car #39 Alex Raschi/Silvio Stefanelli

Alex Raschi said: "It's such a shame we didn't make it to the finish, I had been really enjoying this event. I know a little more about driving on the asphalt than I do on the gravel, so this was a rally which I was looking forward to. Okay, the roads are not so similar to the ones where I drive at home, but from the recce it was nice. I was surprised at how dirty the roads became from the cars ahead pulling out lots of gravel and dirt – and some rocks as well. We had a bit of a problem on the last stage on Saturday. There was a really big rock in the road, we couldn't avoid it and we hit it with the rear wheel. Luckily the car wasn't badly damaged. Also we made

some spins when I was caught out by the change in the condition of the road. During the rally, I prefer to use the hard tyre from the choice of the two Pirellis we had. I struggle a little bit with the soft tyre. It was a little bit more difficult for me to start with as well when I came to this rally with a new co-driver for the first time. Silvio did a good job and we made the recce and the rally without any problems, until the last long stage. The car lost drive in the stage, which was a shame. I don't know exactly what the problem was, but we couldn't repair anything in the stage and we were not able to continue in the event. But now I am looking forward to the next event in France very much."

Car 40: Ott Tänak/Kuldar Sikk

Ott Tänak said: "This has not been an easy event for me. I don't really like asphalt and I don't have any experience of driving on this surface, so I had a lot of work to do. I tried to be steady and sensible, getting as many kilometres as possible, which was what this rally was all about for me. On the fourth stage, I turned into a right-hand hairpin a little bit too sharp: I cut the corner maybe a little bit too much. There was grass inside which looked okay, but there was a rock in there and it hit the car. The suspension was broken and we couldn't carry on. That was a shame because we were in fourth place in PWRC and things were not looking so bad. We came back on Saturday and Sunday and tried to drive sensibly to make some more experience. People asked me which part of this rally I like or I don't like, but for me, it's all tough, because it's all tarmac. I just don't know this surface, I never drove on it and I don't know how the car works. I have to take more practice, but, for sure, this was not the easy place to come and drive for the first time. It's about learning how to use the tyres and to keep the brakes and things like that. It's also about the way we make pace notes on asphalt; this is a little bit different because the car is in a different place on the road in the corners. In some of the stages there was a lot of gravel and we could have driven like we do on normal rallies, but to slide the car is definitely not the fastest way when you are driving on tarmac. I think we have found out quite a lot and now we can use this on the next event in France."

The other quotes

Phil Short, Pirelli Star Driver Supervisor

"I've been very pleased with the way the fourth event in this year's programme has gone. If you take five cars on a rally like this, I think you would probably reckon on losing two of them. This is a very technical and difficult event. Okay, three of them have 'SupeRallied', but the performance – particularly from three of them - has been very good. This has been quite an unusual Rallye Deutschland, the hot and dry weather has made it quite straightforward. When we did our test on Monday, we quite deliberately sent the drivers out on the wrong tyres; it was raining and quite wet and we put them on the hard tyre. They didn't like it, but it gave them an insight into what it would be like if they were caught with the wrong tyres and the conditions changed. In the end, there was nothing really like that. This event has, however, been another very good learning process. The guys have learned about the tyres and how to look after them – and that will serve them well when we arrive in France for some stages which could be quite similar to these. Driver-wise, I have been extremely pleased with Hayden [Paddon], he has driven tremendously well throughout the event. And I have to admit I have been quite surprised at the pace he has shown. He came to an event he didn't know and really a surface where he'd never competed before and he carried the fight to the reigning Production Car World Rally Champion Armindo Araújo. Ott Tänak has also gone well. Okay, he had a small problem when he turned into a hairpin too early on day one and damaged the suspension, but otherwise he has levelled his learning curve on asphalt, a surface he doesn't particularly like or know. Alex was also going well and fighting with drivers who have good experience of this surface. Unfortunately, he retired from the event with some sort of suspected transmission failure in the penultimate stage. Nick and Peter have certainly learned more on this rally. It's another good result, one where we came one stage away from having all of the drivers scoring points in the Production Car World Rally Championship for the second event in succession."

Mario Isola, Pirelli Motorsport Manager

Mario Isola said: "What is interesting is that it is the first Tarmac rally for some of the Pirelli Star Drivers, including Hayden Paddon, who showed good speed and proved he is a very capable driver on Tarmac as well as gravel. By finishing second to Armindo Araújo, the Production Champion - who has done this event before, and who has also competed on Tarmac many times - is very impressive. Alex Raschi performed well but was unlucky not to finish due to a technical problem. Nick Georgiou and Peter Horsey continue their learning curve in what is a very high level of competition."

The results

19th Hayden Paddon (NZ)/John Kennard (NZ) 4 hr 26 min 32.8 sec (2nd in PWRC)
31st Ott Tänak (EST)/Kuldar Sikk (EST)* 4 hr 41 min 42.0 sec (5th in PWRC)
43rd Nick Georgiou (LBN)/Joseph Matar (LBN)* 4 hr 59 min 09.6 sec (7th in PWRC)
45th Peter Horsey (KEN)/Calvin Coolidge (GBR)* 5 hr 01 min 10.6 sec (8th in PWRC)
Alex Raschi (RSM)/Silvio Stefanelli (RSM) Retired, transmission, SS18

* continued under SupeRally regulations

The next event

It's an all-new event for the Pirelli Star Drivers next time out as they tackle the first ever Rally de France-Alsace (1-3 October). The Strasbourg-based event will comprise an all-asphalt route of close to 1,300 kilometres, including 10 different stages run twice. One of the most interesting of those tests will be the 4.1-kilometre run through six-time World Rally Champion Sébastien Loeb's birthplace of Haguenau. The first two days of the route comprise the mainstay of the competitive distance, with the opening loop running south of Strasbourg around Mulhouse, close to the Swiss and German borders. Days two and three are closer to the capital of the Alsace region.

Media links:

Click below to download images of the five Pirelli Star Drivers on Rallye Deutschland.

- Nick Georgiou – click [here](#)
- Peter Horsey - click [here](#)
- Hayden Paddon - click [here](#)
- Alex Raschi - click [here](#)
- Ott Tänak - click [here](#)

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