



End of day Press Conference
Friday 19 October

Team Managers Press Conference

Yves Matton, Citroën Total World Rally Team
Malcom Wilson, Ford World Rally Team
Jost Capito, Volkswagen Motorsport

Q:

It has been a pretty dramatic day here in Italy, it's Mikk Hirvonen who's in the lead but let's talk about Sébastien Loeb. We saw him for one split this morning and then he went off, what happened?

YM: He went off due to a wrong pace note and broke the steering. Séb was very motivated coming into the event of course not for Championship purposes but to win this rally. The rhythm was very high and unfortunately he made a mistake.

Q:

Will we see him tomorrow?

YM: No will not come back tomorrow.

Q:

Let's talk about Mikko, what's the plan now for him?

YM: With a one minute gap he can for sure look at the times of the other drivers and go not so fast in order to get to the end of the day.

Q:

Malcom, A dramatic day for the Ford World Rally Team as well - let's talk about that.

MW: Definitely it hasn't been a good day, I don't really know what to say to be honest. After Loeb went off we had the opportunity to do well but then unfortunately both cars retired. Both Petter and Jari-Matti will be back tomorrow and that's the good news.

Q:

At the moment the customer Fords are one the podium with Evgeny Novikov in second and Ott Tänak in third. They have done a good job today, haven't they?

MW: To be honest all the private guys have done a great job today. It's a shame that Mads Østberg has had a problem because he has been driving very well as well. For Evgeny to be second is great and there's no point tomorrow to take risks and fight with Mikko.



Q:

Jost, two VWs in the Top 10 – with Sébastien Ogier in fourth position overall - and a fastest stage time today. Has it been a good day for you here in Italy?

JC: First of all *'Buonasera'*. It definitely has been a good day for us today - we never saw a S2000 car in fourth place in the WRC before so it's really great. We use the rallies and the time this year to get the experience for next year as rallying is pretty new for the team. For tomorrow if we can keep that position it would be absolutely outstanding. Having an overall win with a S2000 is fantastic, when Séb came into service this evening he was really proud of that.

Q:

That's also a good morale boost for the team as well, isn't it?

JC: That's really what the teams needs. They are capable to bringing a car to the highest level and it gives a lot of confidence for next year.

Q:

Anything can happen on this rally, could we see a S2000 on the podium on Sunday?

JC: Well, that's too much speculation. Our guys will give their very best and they're dreaming of it but I think it's very unlikely.

Top 3 Drivers Press Conference

Mikko Hirvonen, Citroën Total World Rally Team
Evgeny Novikov, M-Sport Ford World Rally Team
Ott Tänak, M-Sport Ford World Rally Team

Q:

Mikko, a day of high drama but you're leading at the end of the day and it seems to have been trouble free. How has it been out there for you?

MH: It has been ok, we had a really good day obviously. For sure I was waiting to have a really difficult fight with Sébastien, Jari-Matti and Petter but they all had some problems so in the end we're now leading by one minute. It has been a difficult afternoon anyway, it was hard to find a rhythm and to keep the pace so that Evgeny didn't get too close. It's not the easiest way to do the rally but so far it has been ok.

Q:

Have you been surprised with the amount of retirements around you?

MH: Maybe a little bit but I don't know if that has anything to do with the fact that all the titles have already been won and everybody was attacking for this one win. For sure last night we were all pushing hard to fight for the victory and maybe it's a bit like that, everybody had this extra push and things started to happen.



Q:

Evgeny, congratulations on the result so far. It has been a tough day out there, how has it been for you?

EN: Yes, it was a very difficult day but the whole rally is quite tricky because the stages are quite fast, narrow, slippery and you have to be always very concentrated and have very precise pace notes. On the first loop it was quite difficult on the tyre wear for everybody whilst on the second one was much better but still very slippery especially on the long stage. We're very happy with the car and with the result, at the moment everything is good.

Q:

Mikko is over a minute ahead of you, what's your strategy for tomorrow? Are you going to hold on to second position or are you going to push?

EN: Of course I will just try to keep my position, I won't even try to come closer so I will just try to keep the same position. Ok, maybe I'll push just a little bit.

Q:

Hold on Evgeny, what happened to 'Maximum Attack'?

EN: It's an old nickname for me, you'll have to find a new one!

Q:

Ott, congratulations on third today! How do you feel about your performance today?

OT: For sure we're very happy with the result, it has been a really good day today. It wasn't easy because we made a wrong tyre choice yesterday and we've been opening the roads today. It has been really difficult but still we managed quite ok. We had a lucky day.

Q:

You've never taken a WRC podium, what would it mean to you to do that this weekend?

OT: We'll find out on Sunday! I don't think too much about that at the moment. Tomorrow it won't be an easy day but we'll concentrate to the maximum and we'll do our best to be on the podium on Sunday.

Q:

Mikko, you have been searching for this win this season. How much do you want?

MH: That was the plan before the rally to end the season with a good result, hopefully winning two rallies. I've been second here five times, I think I have enough of that position so hopefully this year it goes well.