



FÉDÉRATION INTERNATIONALE DE L'AUTOMOBILE

2019 FIA WORLD RALLY CHAMPIONSHIP

RALLY CHILE

Post-event Press Conference
12 May 2019

FIA WORLD RALLY CHAMPIONSHIP

Present:

1st - Ott Tänak (EST), Toyota Gazoo Racing World Rally Team
1st - Martin Järveoja (EST), Toyota Gazoo Racing World Rally Team
2nd - Sébastien Ogier (FRA), Citroën Total World Rally Team
2nd - Julien Ingrassia (FRA), Citroën Total World Rally Team
3rd - Sébastien Loeb (FRA), Hyundai Shell Mobis World Rally Team
3rd - Daniel Elena (FRA), Hyundai Shell Mobis World Rally Team
Tommi Mäkinen (FIN), Team Principal, Toyota Gazoo Racing World Rally Team

Q:

Ott Tänak, you become the first winner of the inaugural Rally Chile, congratulations! You now move to second overall in the championship with this result. How much have you enjoyed this first event in Chile?

OT:

I feel relieved. It has been a tough weekend. Immediately when we did the recce we saw that the conditions were demanding with the roads. It was a tough job with the new rally. It has been difficult to be on the limit, although we have not been going too much over the limit. We are happy and it's nice to be here without really any problems.

Q:

What was your initial feeling on Friday morning when you saw the conditions?

OT:

Friday morning, everything felt fresh and we were learning to feel the limit and that was the same with the car. We finished the first stage and I was struggling with no real feeling. Then we managed to adjust pretty quickly and I believe I was the fastest of the guys. I had a perfect car. I got my confidence and we pulled a little gap on Friday afternoon. After that, it was about managing the car.

Q:

You mentioned today that you couldn't 'relax' as the Frenchmen were fighting so hard behind you. Did you really feel that?

OT:

The stages were tough, fast and narrow and we needed a lot of focus. I was holding back a bit but I hoped to save the tyres for the Power Stage. I wanted to keep something in reserve and keep a high rhythm. It was not an easy job.

Q:

Did you really expect to win the Power Stage?

OT:

These things are difficult to plan. I had a good feeling and tried to be close to the limit without taking risks. The conditions were improving since the first run this morning. It was important to finish the rally this way. On the last couple of events, we have had mishaps and we have lost a lot of points. It was important to score this result. If you do not achieve anything it takes your emotions down. Now we are on the right track and we will keep pushing.

Q:

Martin Järveoja, a great result here after a huge amount of preparation work - especially from your side - to get ready for this event. A satisfying result for you?

MJ:

Yes, for sure. It is really a good feeling to stand on the podium with these legends. It was a big challenge with a new rally, new roads, bad weather conditions... It was a good weekend. A big thanks for the team.

Q:

Sébastien Ogier, congratulations on second position overall, you take back the lead of the championship with this result. Battles all the way through to the end for you - a demanding event?

SO:

I am satisfied with what we achieved. It is positive to take back the lead of the championship. But it was not trouble-free. We were fighting hard all the time. Seb (Loeb) did not make it easy for us. A lot of pressure straight away. I am satisfied. It has been an interesting weekend. We used the videos to prepare new notes. I can sleep well tonight.

Q:

The second stage this morning saw quite a response from you to Loeb's charge. You mentioned a few times this weekend that you were on your limit, it looked like at that point!

SO:

Honestly, when I crossed the finish line, I thought I drove okay. I was still hesitating in a couple of places. It is hard to be on the limit on your first pass on narrow and fast stages like these. They are enjoyable stages but there was a lot of excitement in the car. It's very fast in some places and there is very little room for mistakes. It was super enjoyable. We knew already where the limits are. We had to go for it. There was no other option.

Q:

Can you give us more detail about the issues you have had with the car?

SO:

It is no secret that I have been showing some frustration this weekend. I have not been comfortable when it was slippery and in the technical sections. We have not identified the reason yet. We will work this week on the test and try to solve these issues. I will be first on the road again at the next rally so we are going to need this.

Q:

Julien Ingrassia, a great result and a new event in the championship to keep you fresh?

Jl:

Yes, it is new and we have been discovering a lot of things, for sure. It was very exciting to be here for the first time. The organisers did a good job for this inaugural event. Let's say we had a lot of fun on the Power Stage when the extinguisher exploded in our car. I tried to keep reading the pace-notes and we couldn't breathe any more. I thought: "who is having a bad joke at this moment!". The battle with Seb and Daniel was really enjoyable. It has been fun on Facebook and social media. We are always happy to share some time with them - 100 years experience in their car!

Q:

Sébastien Loeb, your first podium for Hyundai and a great battle to achieve it. How are you feeling at the end of the event?

SL:

I think it is a good place for rally roads. The stages are nice, maybe too fast for me because I am too old for that. It was a really nice rally to drive. We enjoyed it a lot. There were a lot of spectators to support us, that was incredible.

Q:

You started with purpose this morning, taking a big chunk of time out of Ogier. And then he fought back. When did you realise that you couldn't catch him?

SL:

On the WRC, when you don't drive so often, it is not easy to arrive and be competitive against the fastest drivers in the world in a rally car. They are all year in a car like I was in the past. Now I needed to discover that again after a few months away from any competitive driving, and with only one day on gravel, that wasn't easy. I was struggling with the car. But it got better and better and I had more confidence with the notes. I was able to fight with the other guys. In the recce, I said to Daniel that I cannot go fast in these stages. I had no confidence to go fast. I had a lot of hesitation and Seb was faster I did not want to take every risk. I was happy with second or third and I am happy with third now. The fight was intense and I enjoyed that a lot.

Q:

Daniel Elena, what does it feel like to be on the podium on this new event?

DE:

It was a fantastic weekend for us. Okay, we made last year three rallies with Citroën. But that is not the same as a 200km test in a new car and then this rally. I enjoyed the stages. They were fantastic and we had all the conditions. They were narrow, fast and muddy and the atmosphere was good. The road book was perfect and the organisation good.

Q:

Tommi Mäkinen, a great result on a brand new event on the championship calendar. How happy are you with the performance from Ott and Martin and the team this weekend?

TM:

Yes, very happy. It is looking good. The cars are performing very well. I am happy to have this result. It was a good weekend. We continue working hard and we do that. It looks very much like we have three drivers now battling for the championship. They are very close together and fighting to the end of the season. I also want to thank the Rally Chile organisers. They have done a very good job. The stages were absolutely brilliant and there were a massive number of people.

FIA WRC 2 PRO CHAMPIONSHIP

Present:

1st - Kalle Rovannerä (FIN), Škoda Motorsport

1st - Jonne Halttunen (FIN), Škoda Motorsport

Q:

Kalle Rovannerä, it's been a tough start to the season, but does a win here at the first ever Rally Chile make up for that?

KR:

Yes, for sure. It was not so good at the beginning of the season for us, but this was a good rally for us and a nice weekend.

Q:

Early on, you were in a good battle with Mads Østberg, do you feel you were pushing to the maximum to catch him or were you taking it easy?

KR:

Not so much, of course. We had a good pace, me and Mads, but it was the plan to finish the rally. I was not taking the last risk and driving on the limit. I say that Mads was really fast. It is not so easy this rally. The grip was changing and the recce was difficult with a lot of fog in the stages. My pace-notes were actually quite good and it was pretty easy to drive from them. For sure, I think we had a clean rally and I want to be the same on the next one.

Q:

Jonne Halttunen, congratulations on this victory. What are your thoughts?

JH:

Thank you. I think it was a good weekend for us. It was not a good start to the season but it clicked here for us. For sure, it is not easy. Kalle drove quite well and we tried to match Mads. He is an experienced FIA World Rally Car driver and his level is super high. Kalle drove clever. He pushed when he had to push. We had no moments. Maybe we had a small monkey on our backs and now it has gone.

FIA WRC 2 CHAMPIONSHIP

Present:

1st - Takamoto Katsuta (JPN)

1st - Daniel Barritt (GBR)

Q:

Congratulations on your first FIA WRC 2 win of the season, Takamoto Katsuta. We witnessed a great battle throughout the weekend with Alberto Heller. Tough challenge here in Chile?

TK:

This weekend was very difficult for everybody. It was very tricky with high-speed stages and it was not easy for me. It was a new experience, especially in the beginning. I am generally quite happy we finished and we are on target.

Q:

It was quite a battle for a long time with Alberto Heller?

TK:

Of course, I was thinking it was his home event and he tried to push. I wanted to win and tried my best. I am sorry for him. He was very fast. I hope we could have had a good fight until the end, but it wasn't to be. To be honest, the championship is not my target. My target is to get experience for the future. It is sometimes always better to have a good result. In the future, I'll try to do that.

Q:

Daniel Barritt, you have a lot of experience. Was it tough making fresh notes for a new event?

DB:

It has been a challenge but that is the same for everyone. It is interesting to come to a new place. It has gone down very well.

Q:

Did you have to calm Takamoto down at any point?

DB:

Not really. I used a few wise words sometimes, but I generally leave him to make his own mind up. He is clever enough to understand the situation.