

Rally d'Italia Sardegna

Press Office



Comunicato n. 17
18/05/07

SEBASTIEN LOEB E DANIEL ELENA, CITROEN C4 WRC, WON THE FIRST LEG OF RALLY D'ITALIA SARDEGNA

Second and third placed the Ford Focus Rs Wrc of Gronholm e Hirvonen.

The first leg was thrilling for the Rally d'Italia Sardegna, seventh round of World rally Championship and third round of FIA Junior Championship. In the first section of the race were leaders Sebastien Loeb and Daniel Elena, driving a Citroen C4, official car of Citroen Total WRT Team. But for the world rally champion, the first leg has not been easy. Loeb took the lead almost at the end of the leg, after he won three out of today's six special stages. This rally is shaping up to be the toughest battle of the 2007 World Rally Championship. Earlier in the day, Jari Matti Latvala, in his Ford Focus RS WRC, and Markus Gronholm, also driving a Ford Focus were leading.

The two drivers had different destinies. The first one stopped on the SS n. 5, the Terranova one, after touching hard and destroying a suspension. The second one had damper problem that make him slow down, mostly during the last special stage. Gronholm finished 22"4 from Loeb, it means that the challenge is open. Very close, in third position the other BP- Ford World Rally Team driver Mikko Hirvonen. The finish driver, after a very prudent first lap, attacked during the last stages of the day, and he finished to just 29"1 from Loeb, 7" from Gronholm.

Fourth and fifth position are held by Henning Solberg and Dani Sordo respectively. Henning Solberg, won the special stage number three, with his Ford Focus Wrc of Stobart M-Sport Ford Rally Team.

Dani Sordo, on Citroen C4, has finished the race on 5th position without particularities. Petter Solberg, on Subaru Impreza World Rally Team, has finished on sixth position. The Norwegian driver, after a good and boarding start, has slowed up due to a brake problem. The last two positions, valid to get points in the Championship, have been got by Toni Gardemeister, on Mitsubishi Lancer Wrc, and Manfred Stohl, on Citroen Xsara Wrc, OMV Kronos Citroen WRT team.

For what concerning the Junior Rally Championship Classification the two Suzuki Shift of Urno Aava and of Per Gunnar Andersson are leading, they have more than 3' lead on Citroen C2 of Martin Prokop.

The first Italian crew is that one composed by Simone Campedelli and Danilo Fappani, on Mitsubishi Lancer Evo, who are leading the N group. The very young driver from Romagna, only 19 years old, has finished his race faster than Giovanni Manfrinato and Carlo Pisano, on Subaru Impreza.

Between the Sardinian crews Giuseppe Dettori, on Mitsubishi Lancer Evo, Tomaso Pileri, on Mitsubishi Lancer, and Fabio Pistis, on Subaru Impreza have got particularly results.

Tomorrow will start the second leg at 08h00. It will start from the Parc Ferme in Olbia where the drivers will come back not before 18h00. The programme includes other 6 Special Stages for a total of 142.72 km. Between them it is important to remind the Monte Lerno one, well known for the spectacular jump.

Winner of the SS: s.s. 1 Latvala; s.s. 2/5/6 Loeb; s.s. 3 H. Solberg; s.s. 4 Gronholm.

Classification after the first Leg - 1. Loeb - Elena (Citroen C4 Wrc) in 1h42'10"10; 2. Gronholm - Rautiainen (Ford Focus Rs Wtc) a 22"4; 3. Hirvonen - Lehtinen (Ford Focus Rs Wtc) a 29"1; 4. Solberg - Menkerud (Ford Focus Rs Wrc) a 32"9; 5. Sordo - Marti (Citroen C4) a 1'18"3; 6. Solberg - Mills (Subaru Impreza Wrc) a 1'21"0; 7. Gardemeister - Honkanen (Mitsubishi Lancer Wrc) a 2'04"2; 8. Stohl - Minor (Citroen Xsara Wrc) a 2'25"8; 9. Wilson - Orr (Ford Focus Rs Wrc) a 3'34"9; 10. Mac Hale - Nagle (Ford Focus Wrc) a 4'38"3.

Classification Junior Rally Championship after the first Leg

1. Aava - Sikk (Suzuki Swift) in 1h53'54"2; 2. Andersson - Andersson (Suzuki Swift) a 8"3; 3. M.Prokop - Tomanek (Citroen C2) a 3'13"4

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