

Rally d'Italia Sardegna

Press Office



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FORD ONE-TWO AT RALLY D'ITALIA SARDEGNA

At first and second places there are the two Ford Focus Rs Wrc of Marcus Gronholm and Mikko Hirvonen. Sebastien Loeb went out with his Citroen losing the lead of the world rally classification.

Olbia - Marcus Gronholm first placed in the race and in the world rally driver classification. Mikko Hirvonen, second-placed, completes an heavy double victory for the manufacturers classification.

The BP – Ford World Rally Team scored a spectacular results in Rally d'Italia Sardegna that changes completely the face of the World Rally Championship. A victory that nobody, yesterday could have predict. Sebastien Loeb and its C4 was coming from the second leg with an advantage of more than 30"on Gronholm, showing their power and going toward their fifth seasonal victory.

But today, during the first special stage of San Giovanni, almost 11 km long, the French driver went out of a fast bend, driving almost 30 metres out of the road, on the stones. The front left tyre of the Citroen broke and the world rally champion had to withdraw from the race, leaving the leadership to the Fords. Since that moment, Gronholm just had to control until the finish line.

"I'm very happy – said the Ford driver – I could win this race last year, and now I get it. In the last stages we drove with caution in order to avoid to make mistakes. Now the championship is more open, we have just to increase our advantage before to race on the asphalt".

Gronholm and Hirvonen are definitely leading while for the third position on podium Dani Sordo, on Citroen C4 and Henning Solberg, on Ford Focus Wrc have hardly fought. The Spaniard has controlled the efforts of the rival competitors and has been able to be third overall.

Henning Solberg has headed his own brother on Subaru Impreza Wrc 2007. Subaru cars have not had much good luck in Sardinia: few grip and few handiness have characterised the race of Solberg and Atkinson, 10th overall, who have always played as second lead getting good times only in very few occasions.

Tony Gardemeister is sixth overall, on Mitsubishi Lancer Wrc. A very good result for a driver who has a less developed car in comparison to his rivals. Manfred Stohl, on Citroen Xsara Wrc, and the young Finnish Juho Hanninen, on Mitsubishi Lancer have got valid points.

For what concerning the Fia Junior Rally Championship, suitable gym for the Champions of tomorrow, the third round has not changed almost anything.

The Estonian Uurmo Aava, on Suzuki Swift 1600, has headed the team-mate Andersson, while Prokop - Tomanek is third overall, on Citroen C2 Super 1600. No doubts about the victory of the two Suzuki, that have won with large advantage on their rivals. The first driver in the N group and between the Italians is Giovanni Manfrinato, from Veneto, on Subaru Impreza Sti. Second overall the young driver Simone Campidelli on Mitsubishi Lancer Evo IX.

The best Sardinian driver is Giuseppe Dettori, on Mitsubishi Lancer Evo IX

Final Classification of the Rally d'Italia Sardegna

1. Gronholm – Rautiainen (Ford Focus Rs Wrc) in 3h48'42"0; 2. Hirvonen – Lehtinen (Ford Focus Rs Wrc) a 29"2; 3. Sordo – Marti (Citroen C4) a 1'21"8; 4. H. Solberg – Menkerud (Ford Focus Wrc) a 1'36"6; 5. P. Solberg – Philip (Subaru Impreza Wrc 07) a 2'34"2; 6. Gardemeister – Honkanen (Mitsubishi Lancer Wrc) a 5'02"1; 7. Stohl – Minor (Citroen Xsara Wrc) a 5'28"6; 8. Hanninen- Markkula (Mitsubishi Lancer Wrc) a 9'31"7.

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Classification of the Rally Italia Sardegna - Junior Rally Championship

1. Aava – Sikk (Suzuki Swift) in 4h15'03"9; 2. Andersson – Andersson (Suzuki Swift) a 1'09"4; 3. M.Prokop –Tomanek (Citroen C2) a 6'22"8

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