



Press Office

JARI-MATTI LATVALA AND MIKKA ANTILA, ON A FORD FOCUS WRC FROM BP FORD ABU DHABI WORLD RALLY TEAM, ARE IN THE LEAD AFTER DAY ONE OF RALLY D'ITALIA SARDEGNA 2009.

The other Focus Wrc of Mikko Hirvonen is in second position. The event's favorite Sebastien Loeb, Citroen C4 Wrc of Citroen Total World Rally Team, finished day one in third place. Alessandro Bettega leads amongst the JWRC drivers

May 22nd, - The two Ford Focus of the Bp Ford Abu Dhabi World Rally Team are in the lead after day one of Rally d'Italia Sardegna, event organised by the Automobile Club d'Italia and counting as sixth event of the World Rally Championship.

The fastest driver today was Jari-Matti Latvala who, taking advantage of his start number which allowed him to drive on roads swept from gravel by the crews before him, kept a fast pace winning four of today's six stages.

His team mate Mikko Hirvonen finished just behind in second, passing Sébastien Loeb on the very last stage. This will allow Loeb to start as third tomorrow. A good position behind the two who will open the road, cleaning the best lines. The world champion has a 42"8 gap from the leader, which will not be easy to make up.

Petter Solberg lies fourth, keeping a steady pace on his 2006 Citroen Xsara. A favourable starting position boosted Russian Evgeny Novikov up high. With his Citroen C4 of Citroen Junior Team, he ended the day in fifth position.

In the positions giving points for the world championship are Norwegian Henning Solberg, sixth with his Stobart VK M-Sport Ford Focus WRC, fellow countryman Mads Ostberg on a Subaru Impreza Wrc, and Daniel Sordo. The Spaniard, Loeb's team mate, was first slowed down by a turbo sensor problem, then after hitting a rock which broke a suspension in his Citroen.

For what concerns Junior World Rally Championship, Day 1 ends with Alessandro Bettega and Simone Scattolin leading with their Renault Clio R3 of team TRT. They went into the lead mid-leg and held on to it until the end, with little over 15" on Polish Michal Kosciuszko's Suzuki Swift Super 1600.

In the PWRC standings, Swedish Patrick Flodin and his Subaru Impreza are less than one second ahead of fellow countryman Patrik Sandell. Qatari Al Attiyah codriven by Giovanni Bernacchini are third at 6", Bad luck for the Italian crews, Simone Campedelli was quickly out and Giovanni Manfrinato rolled on the last stage of the day.

Amongst the local crews, good results for Giuseppe Dettori, Mitsubishi Lancer Evo IX, Francesco Marrone, Mitsubishi Lancer Evo IX, and Davide Catania with a Subaru Impreza.

Standings after day 1.

1. Latvala- Anttila (Ford Focus Rs Wrc - Bp Ford Abu Dhabi Wrt) in 1h 24' 14".5; 2. Hirvonen – Lehtinen (Ford Focus Rs Wrc - Bp Ford Abu Dhabi Wrt) at 39"8; 3. Loeb – Elena (Citroen C4 Wrc - Citroen Total Wrt) at 42"8; 4. Solberg P. – Mills (Citroen Xsara) a 46"4; 5. Novikov - Moscat (Citroen C4 Wrc - Citroen Junior Team) at 1'04"7; 6. Solberg H.- Menkerud (Ford Focus Rs - Stobart VK M-Sport) a 1'08"2; 7. Ostberg – Engan (Subaru Impreza Wrc) at 1'16"6; 8. Sordo – Marti (Citroen C4 Wrc - Citroen Total Wrt) at 1'37"3; 9. Wilson – Martin (Ford Focus Rs Wrc - Stobart Vk-M Sport) at 2'33"8; 10. Al Qassimi – Orr (Ford Focus Rs Wrc - Bp Ford Abu Dhabi Ford Wrt) at 2'59"9

Rally d'Italia Sardegna

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