



Press Office

JARI-MATTI LATVALA AND MIKKA ANTILA, FORD FOCUS WRC OF THE BP FORD ABU DHABI WORLD RALLY TEAM, STILL LEAD THE RALLY D'ITALIA SARDEGNA 2009.

Team mate Mikko Hirvonen follows in second place, only 9th behind. Petter Solberg is 3rd. Sébastien Loeb, Citroen C4 Total World Rally Team, is only fourth after a puncture.

May 23rd 2009 - It was to be the decisive day of Rally d'Italia Sardegna 2009, and so it was, even if the battle for victory is still open. Today's stages have left two crews to fight for victory in the sixth round of the World Rally Championship, organised by the Automobile Club d'Italia. The two drivers of the Bp Ford Abu Dhabi World Rally Team, Jari-Matti Latvala and Mikko Hirvonen are only divided by 9th. They will fight for victory in day Three tomorrow.

The second day was also decisive, albeit negatively, for team Citroen Total. Sébastien Loeb had a puncture in the Fiorentini stage, the penultimate of day 2, while Dani Sordo had problems all day long. The first finished fourth, while the latter ended in eighth place.

In third place this evening behind the Ford duo is Petter Solberg, with a fast and constant race, where he also won one of the stages. The Norwegian driver only has a 2nd advantage on Loeb who will try to pass him tomorrow to finish on the podium. After the first four crews, the gaps are already important. Novikov is fifth but is 1'30" from the Frenchman in front of him. In the points scoring area are Matthew Wilson, on a Ford from Team Stobart, and Al-Qassimi on another Focus of the Bp Ford Abu Dhabi World Rally Team. He leads Dani Sordo who is in the last points scoring position.

Bad luck for two Norwegians: Henning Solberg stopped when he was eighth and Mads Ostberg, coming out of the last stage with a high stage time, when he was sixth overall.

For what concerns the Junior World Rally Championship, Alessandro Bettiga and Simone Scattolini were slowed down by a series of problems which made them drop down to sixth. Michal Kosciuszko, Suzuki Swift Super 1600, leads in front of Martin Prokop, Citroen C2. Aaron Burkart, Suzuki, is 3rd.

In the Production World Rally Championship Swedish Patrik Sandell leads by 23",5 on Qatari Al Attiyah, codriven by Giovanni Bernacchini. Portuguese Armindo Araujo is 3rd. Patrick Flodin who was leading yesterday in his Subaru Impreza suffered a series of mechanical problems.

Amongst the local crews, Andrea Pisano leads on his Mitsubishi Lancer Evo IX, codriven by partially sighted Francesco Cozzula.

Only one day to go before the end. Tomorrow, - Sunday May 24th – the crews will face a total of 323 km with five stages for 86 km. Everything is still open, also because the two runs on the Monte Olia stage, 19.31 km, and Soliris, 18.66 km, and the single pass on the Arzachena stage, 10.24 km, are full of tricks.

Standings after day two: 1. Latvala - Anttila (Ford Focus Rs Wrc - Bp Ford Abu Dhabi Wrt) in 2h58'03"5; 2. Hirvonen – Lehtinen (Ford Focus Rs Wrc - Bp Ford Abu Dhabi Wrt) at 9th ; 3. Solberg P. – Mills (Citroen Xsara) at 1'12"6; 4. Loeb – Elena (Citroen C4 Wrc - Citroen Total Wrt) at 1'14"8; 5. Novikov - Moscatt (Citroen C4 Wrc - Citroen Junior Team) at 2'46"0; 6. Wilson – Martin (Ford Focus Rs Wrc - Stobart Vk M-Sport) at 5'02"8 ; 7. Al Qassimi – Orr (Ford Focus Rs Wrc - Bp Ford Abu Dhabi Wrt) at 6'57"9, 8. Sordo – Marti (Citroen C4 Wrc - Citroen Total Wrt) at 9'18"8.

Stage wins – Latvala 1-2-4-6; Loeb 5-8-9-12; Hirvonen 7-10; Sordo 2: Solberg 11.

Rally d'Italia Sardegna

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