MINI WRC TEAM
Press release

Rally RACC – Rally of Spain
20th – 23rd October
12th of 13 rounds of the FIA World Rally Championship

Preview.

Munich, 14th October, 2011. For its fifth event of the 2011 World Rally Championship the MINI WRC Team is heading to home turf for Dani Sordo (ES) and Carlos del Barrio (ES) for the Rally RACC – Rally of Spain. If the Spaniards in MINI John Cooper Works WRC number 37 were happy after Germany, they were delighted after their last event in France as they moved one place higher on the podium to second. This event in the Tarragona region of Spain will be where Kris Meeke (GB) and Paul Nagle (IR) will be looking to finally achieve a good finish in their number 52 MINI.

The team's Technical Director, Dave Wilcock, is very keen for the drivers to test immediately before every rally, and this tactic has certainly worked well. Therefore on Sunday and Monday both drivers will be testing on roads near to where the rally is being held.

David Richards, Team Principal:
"Germany and France exceeded all our expectations. This early in the development of the new car, we were not expecting to be challenging for a win and I think it is a real testament to the engineering team that they have managed to produce such a fast and reliable car straight out of the box. As for Spain, it is Dani's home event and I am sure he will be looking for a third straight podium, while I know Kris is determined to finish this rally and I am sure with the pace he has shown, that he too will be in a strong position."

Dani Sordo:
"This rally is obviously very special for me, as it is my home event. Many friends and fans will be there to watch. That is fun and gives me that extra motivation to get a good result. Since the organisers moved away from driving purely on gravel, the average speed of the rally has increased significantly. Despite this, you have to bear in mind that the weather in this part of Spain can be very variable when the rally is held at the end of October. If it stays dry you can be very quick. If it rains, the speed may drop but you have to remain just as focused, as the surface becomes very slippery."

Kris Meeke:
"I am looking forward to this rally, especially as it is also a home event for Dani. He is always extremely quick there. The organisers' decision in 2010 to no longer run the event on the traditional tarmac when the WRC regulations were changed is good for me, as I like gravel stages. I have a lot to learn as the last time I was there was in 2005 in the JWRC and so it is more or less a new event for me so I shall make completely new notes. As it takes place at the end of October, the weather can also play a major role. When it rains, the surface quickly becomes slippery. If it remains dry, you can be very quick here."

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History and Background:
In 2005 the Spanish WRC event moved from the Costa Brava to the Costa Daurada, and its base is now the seaside resort of Salou, with the PortAventura theme park being the location for the permanent service park on an event which has no remote service.

It was in 2010 that the organisers decided to use mixed surfaces on this event, so there is an extra challenge for the crews with some stages being a mixture of both gravel and tarmac. However, this didn't stop the Sébastien Loeb (FR) steamroller as he won his fifth event in Spain last year.

After a ceremonial start on Thursday at 20.00 the action starts on Friday with the cars leaving the PortAventura service park in Salou at 07.00. There are six stages on day one with stages one and four gravel and two, three, five and six a mixture of gravel and tarmac. The stage mileage the drivers will cover before heading back to Salou, where parc fermé in is 21.53 is 160.36 kilometres. Day two is just tarmac and starts from Salou at 08.30. There are another six stages with numbers seven and ten being the longest of the rally at 45.97 kilometres. The total stage distance before the overnight halt at 18.21 is 143.54 kilometres. On the final day, which is again only tarmac, the cars leave parc fermé at 06.00 and compete on another six stages over 102.62 kilometres before heading back to Salou, where the first car is due in parc fermé at 14.51. The total rally distance is 1589.90 kilometres with 406.52 kilometres being on stages.

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