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SEBASTIEN LOEB AND DANIEL ELENA, CITROEN DS3 WRC, ARE THE WINNERS OF THE 2011 RALLY D'ITALIA SARDEGNA

The seven times world champion wins the Italian round of the World Rally Championship.

Olbia may 8th – Sebastien Loeb and Daniel Elena, Citroen Ds3 Wrc of the Citroen Total Team, have won the 2011 Rally d'Italia Sardegna, event organized by the Automobile Club d'Italia, valid for the World Rally Championship, for the Super 2000 World Championship and for the Wrc Academy. For the Frenchman, winner of seven world titles, this is the fourth victory in Sardinia. Today, in the last day of the competition, Mikko Hirvonen, Ford Fiesta WRC Abu Dhabi World Rally Team and Petter Solberg, Citroen DS3, tried the last attack to the frenchman's leadership but only managed to partly reduce the gap from the champion who actually looked like he was in control of his opponents' outbursts. Loeb pointed out several times that being first on the road during the three days of competition certainly did not help. The winner's attack began on the third stage of the Italian race, when he won the first of the four stages in which he set fastest time, building his success with tactical intelligence. In second place the Finnish crew of the Ford Fiesta - Ford Abu Dhabi World Team - Mikko Hirvonen and Jarno Lehtinen, who tried in every way the attack on the leadership until the meters of special stages, winning three of them. Hirvonen has repeatedly stated that he did not want to give up until the finish, despite the time lost after the puncture he suffered in the first day. Third step of the podium for Norwegian Petter Solberg, another champion who was a protagonist of the fight for first place and winner of two special stages with the Citroen DS WRC 3 of the Petter Solberg World Rally Team, who won the first special stage, but was then forced to make up time after a few problems during the first day of competition.

Behind the first three crews, the gaps are larger, starting from the other Frenchman Sebastien Ogier - Citroen Total team - who finished fourth in Olbia, in the fight for second place on the podium until stage number 16, when the collision with a stone and the damage to the rear suspension waived any hope left for him. Fifth position for another Norwegian Mads Ostberg at the wheel of the Team Stobart M Sport Ford Fiesta, author of an alternated race with also some mechanical trouble. Sixth position overall for the rookie Mini John Cooper Works WRC of the Mini WRC Team, with which Spaniard Daniel Sordo drove a good race, although with some youth problems with the set up of the car. Seventh place overall with the success among the participants in the Super 2000 World Championship for Estonian Ott Tanak, leader in his class since the first day of competition and always quick with the Ford Fiesta S2000, followed by Finland's Juho Hanninen at the wheel of the Skoda Fabia S2000. The protagonist of the 2011 Rally d'Italia Sardegna was undoubtedly the Finnish driver of the Ford Abu Dhabi World Rally Team, Jari-Matti Latvala, winner of seven stages with the Ford Fiesta RS WRC, with which he was particularly fast, only thinking about stage wins after a roll during the first day excluded him from the fight for the top ten.

Special stage winners: SS. 1/17 Solberg, SS. 3/4/6/7 Loeb, SS. 2/5/8/18 Hirvonen, SS. 9/10/11/13/14/15/16, Latvala, SS. 12 Ogier.

Provisional Standings of the Rally d'Italia Sardegna 2011: 1. Loeb – Elena (Citroen Ds3 Wrc) in 3h45'40"9; 2. Hirvonen – Lehtinen (Ford Fiesta Rs Wrc) at 11'2; 3. Solberg – Patterson (Citroen Ds3 Wrc) at 23"8; 4. Ogier – Ingrassia (Citroen DS3 Wrc) at 1'31"5; 5. Ostberg – Andersson (Ford Fiesta RS Wrc) at 2'42"6; 6. Sordo – Del Barrio (Mini John Cooper Works Wrc) at 3'27"6; 7. Tanak - Sikk (Ford Fiesta Super 2000) a 7'10"9; 8 . Hanninen – Markkula (Skoda Fabia Super 2000) at 7'37"6; 9. Wilson – Martin (Ford Fiesta RS Wrc) at 8'00"4; 10. Prokop – Tomanek (Ford Fiesta S2000) at 11'28"2.

WRC provisional standings: 1. Loeb, 100; 2. Hirvonen, 93; 3. Ogier, 81; 4. Latvala, 68; 5. Solberg, 46.

SWRC (S2000) provisional standings: 1. Tanak, 40; 1.Prokop 40 3. Kruuda, 38; 4. Hanninen, 36; 5. Sousa, 25; 5. Gassner, 25.