

# Rally d'Italia Sardegna

Press Office



Olbia, May 17<sup>th</sup> 2006

## Rally d'Italia Sardegna is on!

It's finally come the top moment of the Italian Rally Sardinia, the seventh challenge of World Rally Champ and Junior World Rally Cup.

Tomorrow is going to take place the shakedown, that will be the first moment of a spectacular three-days-show. The shakedown is going to be a test for drivers and cars who will be run in the race, and it will start at 8.00 in the morning until 12.00, on La Crucitta di Sant'Antonio di Gallura place (distance of 4,3 km).

On a track that has the same technical characteristics the race track, the drivers will be able at last to set up their cars just for the three legs of the Italian Rally Sardinia, scheduled from Friday, the 18th from Sunday, the 21st. The shakedown moment will be very important for the race strategies for Sebastian Loeb, the man who's leading the general overall standings of WRC at the moment: "Now is the moment to think straight to the championship – says the 32 years old driver assisted by Daniel Elena on Citroen Xsara WRC of Kronos Total team – and every placement would be capital for us. We must start our race as quick as possible on the first leg, and take the advantage to manage than our race in the other two legs".

The main opponent for world champion Loeb will be Marcus Gronholm, winner of two races in 2006 champ on Ford Focus run by BP-Ford World Rally Team. "We have done some important tests yet – explains the Finnish in couple with Timo Rautiainen – and I'm sure that it's now the moment to gain over. I must win, because I want to close an unlucky four-races sequence".

The hopes of the Italians all for Gigi Galli that, with Giovanni Bernacchini on the Peugeot 307 WRC in the Pirelli colors, have conquered one splendid third place in the Rally of Argentina. In Sardinia they have been followed by hundred of fan coming from all the nation. As well as the Olbia's Galli fan club. "I will not disappoint them – the 33years Italian driver said - Sure, the rally will finish only on Sunday in Olbia, but however I'm so motivated. In Argentina I have conquered my best result in World Championship and above all I was in my second race at the wheel of a new car. With the Pirelli we made a good job and the package is very good. The special stages are very improved regarding what I have known two years ago and now I feel quite optimistic".

After the publication of the First Leg order of departure, the crews will reach Porto Cervo from the 18,00 where at 20.00 it will be the official start of the event with the Ceremony in Marina Vecchia. All the drivers and the cars will parade on the ramp where, after three days of race, the protagonists will be received for the Prize-Giving Ceremony on Sunday 21 (at 14,15).

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The Ceremonial Start will be introduced from another fascinating parade. Such as an "out of time" meeting between different technical concepts of rally-car coming from different ages, a rare series of '70-'80s models will go onto the ramp before the newest ones. It will be possible to admire 1970's Lancia Fulvia HF of Simo Lampinen, now Clerk of the Course in the Sardinian race; 1972's 124 Fiat Spider Gr.4 European Champion with Lele Pinto and Gino Macaluso; 1976's Lancia Stratos of Lele Pinto and Arnaldo Bernacchini; 1974's Fiat 124 Abarth of Fulvio Bacchelli and Bruno Scabini; 1978's Fiat 131 Abarth (Alitalia colors) of Markku Alen; 1983's Lancia 037 European Champion with Miky Biasion; 1986's Lancia Delta S4 of Markku Alen; 1992's Lancia Delta of Juha Kankkunen. At the wheel of "Queens of International Rally" they will be, between the others, Simo Lampinen, Luigi Macaluso, President of the CSAI, Markku Alen, Piero Longhi and Piero Liatti. The entire collection will be exposed during the three days of contest in front of the Archaeological Museum of Olbia (Headquarter Rally).

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