

Rally d'Italia Sardegna

Press Office



Press release N. 23

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SEBASTIEN LOEB AND DANIEL ELENA , ON CITROEN XSARA WRC, WIN RALLY D'ITALIA SARDEGNA

Second place for Mikko Hirvonen Ford Focus Wrc

Another win, the fifth in the 2006 World Rally Championship, for Sebastien Loeb , Daniel Elena and their unreachable Citroen Xsara Wrc of the Kronos Total Team. The Italian round confirmed that, also this year, Loeb will be the one to defeat. His victory in Sardinia was anyway more difficult than the others gained in the first part of the season. In fact, Marcus Gronholm held on with his Focus of BP Ford World Rally Team, but he had to leave at the beginning of leg 2 when he hit a rock loosing the engine oil. The finnish driver retired, the race for the place was over, as Loeb began to gain time on all the others. With this last win, the fifth on seven races already disputed, Loeb is alone at the head of the world championship with 31 points advantage over the second one.

Once Gronholm got out , another Finns manage to gain a good place: Mikko Hirvonen, from Ford too, is second , and reached his best result in a world championship. Hirvonen, after taking the second place, didn't have problems to guard it till the end of the race. The only to press him was Daniel Sordo, driver of another Citroen Xsara Wrc. The twenty-three years old guy confirmed once more to be the real revelation of this year, gaining the third position just five points far from Gronholm. Another spanish , Xavier Pons, with the second Citroen Xsara Wrc from Kronos Total team, gained the fourth position.

Behind the first four took place Jussi Valimaki, with his Mitsubishi Lancer Wrc, Kristian Sohlberg, Subaru, Manfredo Stohl, Peugeot 307 Wrc, and the Belgian Duval, the last in the score zone with his Skoda Fabia Wrc.

Not so lucky Gigi Galli, who couldn't run on the last leg. The engine's problems he had yesterday reappeared just near the finish line, making him stop. A pity for the pilot of Peugeot, who was fourth when he had to leave following the third one with just one second of delay. Today's races were very important for the final classification of Junior World Championship's fifth leg . On today's opening Guy Wilks retired after winning the first two legs. The winner was Patrick Sandell, Renault Clio Super 1600, who arrived before Rautenbach's Clio and the two Aava's and Anderson's Suzuki Swift.

Alessandro Bettega won the Ford Fiesta Trophy with his Trt supported car. Winner of Subaru Cup, Alan Scorcioni, before Bruno Bentivogli.

Unlucky Simone Campedelli, Mitsubishi, who was for a long time in the first places in N group, and had to retire for technical problems just before the finish line. The Finnish Hannine won between the production cars.

Final Classification – 1. Loeb – Elena (Citroen Xsara Wrc) in 3h 54'18"9; 2. Hirvonen – Lehtinen (Ford Focus Wrc) a 2'41"4; 3. Sordo – Marti (Citroen Xsara Wrc) a 3'27"7; 4. Pons – Del Barrio (Citroen Xsara Wrc) a 5'28"3; 5. Valimaki- Kalliolepo (Mitsubishi Lancer Wrc) a 7'08"8; 6. Sohlberg - Tuominen (Subaru Impreza Wrc) a 7'36"9; 7. Stohl – Minor (Peugeot 307 a 8'18"4; 8. Duval – Prevot (Skoda Fabia Wrc) a 9'45"8

Drivers world classification: (unofficial) 1.Loeb 66; 2. Gronholm 35; 3. Sordo 30; 4. Stohl 20; 5. Solberg 18;

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