



2019 FIA WORLD RALLY CHAMPIONSHIP RALLY ARGENTINA

Meet the Crew - Press Conference End of Day - Saturday 27th, April

Present:

Andrea Adamo - Hyundai Shell Mobis WRT
Kyle Lindstrom - Toyota Gazoo Racing WRT
Pierre Budar - Citroën Total WRT
Richard Millener - M-Sport Ford World Rally Team

We welcome the Team Managers to the End of Day Press Conference.

Q:

Thierry Neuville in the first position and Andreas Mikkelsen in the second position and they had a strong day today, tell me Andrea (Adamo) you are happy at the end of the day.

AA:

I'm happy, but this is not finished.

Q:

Let's talk about Andreas first, because he set some really good times this afternoon, he was in a bit of a battle out there. We wondered whether he would stay ahead of Meeke and he did that!

AA:

Yes, because he is Mikkelsen! I'm not surprised. We knew we were improving step by step, and this guy in this condition has always been reasonably competitive. I'm not surprised about the pace of Andreas because I always thought he would be competitive. He has already shown that in a previous rally along the season so far. Sometimes he has made a few mistakes, but it is always better to fight and crash than just crash.

Q:

Thierry has over 40 second going into the final day in comparison to his team mate Andreas Mikkelsen and he is not going to be pushing too hard tomorrow, but the blood pressure will be up and the heart rate high, Andrea, it would be great for the championship if he could see the win tomorrow.

AA:

Yes, it is clear that we cannot tell Mikkelsen to go slow when the cars behind are going faster, but whatever you tell them you can make a mistake, because you can be the one to oblige them to go slow and they crash if you tell them to fast, they can make a mistake because you told them to go fast. Anyway, I'm paid to take the "guilty" figure.

Q:

Kyle, let's speak about Ott Tänak. We saw him stopped in a stage this afternoon and it didn't seem to have had an accident or anything. He just pulled off at the side of the road. What happened with Ott?

KL:

After the day service he contacted us and said that battery voltage was lower than it should. We haven't talked much but it seems it has something to do with the alternator or battery.

Q:

Tell me about Kris Meeke then because we see him in a great position right now and ready to battle tomorrow. What more can be done tomorrow?

KL:

He has been driving well today. He lost some time with a puncture in the first stage, but otherwise he had a good day. Andrea (Adamo) will let the boys fight tomorrow, and with Pierre (Budar) we are around the corner so we will see what is going to happen.

Q:

Pierre Budar, now six times World Champion Sebastién Ogier is keen to get as many points as he possibly can for his championship title. There is a big battle going on, there's other things going on behind the scenes as well. Let's talk about the battle first and foremost though. What have you thought of what's done out there today?

PB:

Finally, Seb made a nice afternoon, let's say. This morning it was quite difficult he had a damage due to a modification of the road book and he had a huge consequence. But this afternoon he did well

Q:

Now we saw Seb hesitate not quite where to go in that section of stage you've talked about. He's also mentioned that the stage and the other drivers maybe took the shortcut around it. What happens now Pierre, is Citroen putting a protest against any other drivers?

PB:

No, we didn't make any protest of anything but we just requested a clarification to the organizer where is the road to be followed for this afternoon loop, we had described this clarification and now we are waiting for any decision to know if some driver didn't follow the road book.

Q:

We are going to turn to Rich Millener now then. Rich, it's been a tough afternoon. We can see Elfyn Evans' car back in Service. He managed to find a rock out on the stage,

probably the only rock for about two kilometres, unfortunately. Both crew are ok but how is the car? Will it continue on?

RM:

Yes, like you said, all the drivers are very skillful and that was a new skill today, finding that rock because it was the only one to hit and he managed to hit head on so it was a perfect line. Unfortunately, as you see did quite a bit of damage, we had to retire the car so it won't continue tomorrow because we have to think about Chile so the guys are going to work on it in the Service Park for the next few days to get it ready again and then we'll need to use it in the next rally which is not what we have wanted to do not what the team wanted to do but we have to be sensible, we have no other option unfortunately.

Q:

A shame to lose Elfyn tomorrow but Suninen still remains and it's still a learning event for him. Some problems along the way today but crucially, Richard, he is still here.

RM:

Slow and steady sometimes is the best way. Slow is the wrong way, that's a bit unfair. He is still there, there's a lot got on today, he is making up some places, it's been a tricky rally for him and he said when he came back to see me he was struggling to understand why he so off the pace. I think sometimes if you are not in the right rhythm it's very hard to change that. We just have to help him get through tomorrow and concentrate on the next rally. It's not been a perfect rally for him but I think he has done a good job, and we are still here and all the others have had some issues. We can still make it a couple of places before the end of the event.

Thank you very much and good luck for the final day. Ladies and gentleman Andrea Adamo, Kyle Lindstrom, Pierre Budar and Richard Millener.

Present:

Thierry Neuville - Hyundai Shell Mobis WRT

Andreas Mikkelsen - Hyundai Shell Mobis WRT

Kris Meeke - Toyota Gazoo Racing WRT

Q:

We have our top three drivers at the end of the day here at Rally Argentina. In third position overall, representing Toyota, we would like to welcome Kris Meeke to the stage. In second position, representing Hyundai, Andreas Mikkelsen and our rally leader at the end of day three, Thierry Neuville.

Welcome to all and well done on completing day three here at Rally Argentina. Thierry, it's been a drier day out there, the sun has come out finally here, it's a beautiful landscape we all got to see today and now you couldn't focus more than on anything but the stages, but it's been a good day out there for you?

TN:

There was not enough time to appreciate the landscape and the sun that came out but obviously all conditions were better than yesterday's. It was a little bit less tricky I have

enjoyed the fight out there. The morning was quite tough, we gave in some time to Ott (Tänak), but we were clear-minded that we wanted to keep the leading position. Sadly, we saw that Ott (Tänak) had some trouble, so we could take it a little bit easier. And we are a little bit more released now.

Q:

You obviously passed Ott (Tänak) on that middle stage, but I'm sure, well I don't know, sometimes I'm amazed what, you guys, pick up on the stages. Did you know it was him when you passed?

TN:

To be honest, no. I saw the Toyota up there but it could be Kris (Meeke), Jari-Matti (Latvala) or Ott (Tänak), but the team informed me out of the stage that Ott (Tänak) could have had a problem. I've been to the staff line and I saw that Ott had switched off the engine and was waiting at the staff line and just five seconds before starting, the engine stopped so I knew that he was probably fighting against some electricity issues, but except the spare battery he wouldn't go very far.

Q:

I'm not sure if you can ever say any lead is comfortable here going into the final day in Argentina but you have over 40 seconds in hands, Terry, you know what it takes to win here, you know what it takes to fight on the stages tomorrow you don't really need any pushing tomorrow. What is the objective? What is the strategy for you tomorrow?

TN:

We are quite comfortable at the moment but three challenging stages waiting for us so we need to keep up a good speed, try to enjoy the last day. The sun is out, the stages are beautiful tomorrow, and there will be a lot of spectators hopefully cheering for us. I'm looking forward to that and then we are going to finish the fight with my mate Andreas (Mikkelsen) and Seb (Ogier) and Kris (Meeke) who are all in the close fight for podium positions but I hope the guys can help me a little bit in the fight for the championship tomorrow.

Q:

Thank you very much Terry. Let's have a chat with your teammate Andreas who is in second position. It was a really good day for you and a really strong afternoon. There was a lot of pace out there, a lot of confidence great position to be now at the end of the day but there's a battle behind.

AM:

Yes, there is. We started the day in fifth position and losing a bit of time actually in the morning loop, I was not very happy with my driving. We did a lot of research in the midday service, came out again and then set some really good times also helped a bit by the problems both Kris (Meeke) and Seb (Ogier) had. I'm very happy with the performance, things are looking good for tomorrow but there are three tricky stages. I feel very good on them, we were competitive there last year.

Q:

You mentioned how tricky the stages are there Andrea, and they really are we've seen lots of drama around the final I think for every single driver in the WRC when it comes to battling. How much do you risk out there tomorrow to hold on to second position?

AM:

I think that if you really push in these three stages you can win a lot of time and if you relax you will lose a lot of time. So, I'm aware of this, and we'll just continue in the rhythm I'm driving at the moment, it feels really comfortable and we have a good pace so if we do that it will be difficult for them to catch us. That's the plan.

Q:

Andrea thank you very much. Let's give the microphone now to Kris Meeke. You know what it takes to win this event, Kris, you know how tough these final three stages are, how demanding they are, how much you have to push out there. What is the objective from you tomorrow because you are the highest place within Toyota, there is a lot of pressure on your shoulders to get to the highest point you can but also to finish?

KM:

Yes, that's part of the job as a rally driver, you have to finish as high as possible, so for sure tomorrow we'll do our best to stay on the podium. It's been a tough day. In the morning loop, we lost the brakes after a water splash and automatically that caused us to go wide onto a river crossing where we got a double puncture so we had to do the Super Special with a puncture and we drop a few seconds. It is a quite interesting battle for the podium places. It's been a difficult afternoon. We have to do our job tomorrow. For sure I'll do the best job I can to keep Seb (Ogier) behind. Anything can happen. These stages are beautiful especially with the sun shining but they are certainly still a challenge.

Q:

Kris, we saw this afternoon stages as Andreas mentioned he was keeping ahead and that they were doing a good job. What more can the engineers give you tomorrow? Is there any trick tonight they can perform down in Toyota the clever boys of course? Can they give you any more performance going into tomorrow?

KM:

Yes, my set-up wasn't perfect, to be honest. They could add something to give me a little bit more support in there. Tomorrow there are different stages again. For sure we'll do everything tonight to have a perfect set up tomorrow. Let's see, it's going to be an interesting day with the sunshine, the incredible fans, so for sure we want to put up a good show.