

Julien Moncet (Hyundai Shell Mobis World Rally Team)
Jari-Matti Latvala (Toyota Gazoo Racing WRT)
Richard Millener (M-Sport Ford World Rally Team)

Julien, what a day Hyundai have had. Ott continues to hold the lead at Rally Finland. Another brilliant performance today.

JM: What a day indeed. They kept us spellbound all day. It has been an incredible fight, an epic battle with Kalle. They were fighting all day, every tenth of a second. Ott was outstanding. Today he really pushed the car. We, or me at least, didn't expect to still be in the lead tonight and it's a great satisfaction for all of us. The team worked a lot to try and improve the set-up to make sure the reliability was there and we had no problem all day so it's a very, very good day for us. It's still only an eight-second gap to Kalle. We have four stages to go, about 40km. It can be a lot in Finland but for me it's not enough. I would prefer if we had much more! I know Jari-Matti does not want to make it easy for me, but we will push until the end tomorrow. We will check the car tonight and prepare it tomorrow to push for the maximum performance and I'm sure Ott will do the rest and we will fight for the win. Still now we should not forget about Thierry who did a good day as well. He started seventh in the morning and managed to get two positions back. He had a good day where we worked on the set-up, he was able to get some consistency and some confidence and his target tomorrow will be a bit different. I think he will try to get some points on the Power Stage but I don't think it's possible to get more than that.

Julien, you said you were a bit surprised to be in the middle seat tonight. I'm sure Ott will tell me that as well. He's still surprised to be leading at the end of the day. For Hyundai Finland has not been a fantastic event over the years, but here it is looking really good right now. Both drivers said before the event they would be happy just to be on the podium and Ott is fighting right at the front. What's changed?

JM: I said the same as well, a podium was our only physical target, nothing more and yes, now we are fighting for the win. As you said, historically we have always been not so good in Finland. I would not say bad, but not so good, so it comes really as a surprise for all of us, a good surprise. When you look back at Estonia two weeks ago it has been very difficult for us and we are still trying to understand what has happened between Estonia and Finland, it is not really clear for sure. Ott is mostly responsible for it, but still we have to look deeper into the data to understand but the car is the same. Yeah, it's a good surprise, let's keep the good surprise until tomorrow and go for the next races as well. It will help the team definitely to get some good motivation back.

Jari-Matti, second position for Kalle Rovanperä, but as Julien said it's only 8.4s. You've seen what he's done today. He's gone from fourth to second, he's had a brilliant afternoon. What can he do tomorrow, can he go out there and push Tänak for the win?

J-ML: Kalle has done a really superb day, really pushing hard and everything he can. A really good performance. But at the same time Ott has been driving really well, fighting, taking risks and done a good job. So we have been able to catch, it's been getting closer and closer but going into the final day it's eight seconds. Even though Julien said it's not a lot but it's difficult to catch tomorrow on those stages which are so familiar for all the drivers. But I'm sure we want and also Kalle will try

and go there and attack in the morning, and the first two stages are the most important ones, maybe the first one in the morning even more important. If you can get closer then you can build up the pressure and then try to really fight for the victory. But then if you start losing time in the first two stages then you have to really start thinking about the points for the Power Stage. But for sure we don't want to give up and I think for everybody it's best to have a proper fight. And I say to Julien earlier victory doesn't feel great if you don't fight for it.

So is that a yes or a no for Kalle to catch Ott tomorrow?

J-ML: It's both actually! Yes, it is the target, but then I think it's our target for the first two stages and then we'll see, then maybe we'll have to change the strategy if it's not looking good. But yes, Kalle can fight 100% for the victory, even though he has the championship in a good position. But it's also very important in Finland in front of the home crowd.

And that's it, you've got the home crowd here, everyone is supporting the team and Kalle. What does it feel like to have all the fans back in the service park because there has been such an energy here this weekend.

J-ML: I haven't been this busy ever in my life. We've taken a lot of photos. The support has been enormous, tremendous to see all these flags in the stages, people singing. It's an incredible feeling and I'm really, really happy to see how much people are supporting the rally sport and how nice an atmosphere it is. So thanks a lot for coming here.

Richard, let's talk about the tough stuff first. Craig Breen was looking good out there today, we'd seen good pace from him over the last 24 hours but unfortunately it all went a little bit wrong. Tell us what happened and whether we'll see him tomorrow.

RM: Yeah, another frustrating day really. I think we wanted to take the fight to the guys at the front and we asked Craig to see if he could push a little bit harder and unfortunately he was slightly over the limit on one of those crests and landed on a bank on the other side of the road where there was a big rock and as you will have seen ripped the rear suspension clean off. Pretty disappointing. We know Craig can be fast and we know the car is fast enough, but we're struggling to put it all together at the moment which is difficult for us, difficult for the team. We have such high competition we are up against, so we can't afford to make any of these mistakes and unfortunately we saw that this morning. But the guys have done a good job, Craig will be back again tomorrow and try and get his head back into the right frame of mind and see if we can salvage anything on the Power Stage but more importantly just get back up to speed because Ypres is only a couple of weeks away.

But it has been a positive afternoon with some good times from Gus Greensmith and Jari Huttunen has done well and so has Loubet, so there are positives to take from today.

RM: Yeah I think Loubet is going to go for it, two and a half minutes to make up in four stages... see if we can join the fight! I think maybe it's a bit hard for us this weekend. Again like normal, everybody having some good positives but we need to start pulling it together for overall rally results. But we'll get there and like Jari said you don't feel like you've won until you are in the fight and we know we can be in the fight, but not this weekend for us unfortunately.

OK, so you're watching the fight right now. Is it Tänak or Rovannerä tomorrow on the top step?

RM: If I don't say the Finnish person I have to run out the back, all right? Honestly, I think Ott is going to be hard to beat.

Ott Tänak (Hyundai Shell Mobis World Rally Team)

Kalle Rovannerä (Toyota Gazoo Racing WRT)

Esapekka Lappi (Toyota Gazoo Racing WRT)

Ott, what another incredible day you have had in Finland. Your team boss Julien Moncet just said he wasn't sure he'd be sat in the middle chair tonight.

Do you feel the same?

OT: But we are sitting so it's fine.

It is fine. You've had a hell of a day out there, it's been some tough competition. The four of you including Elfyn Evans have been flat out on the pace all day. Are you happy with the pace you have been showing, is there more to come maybe tomorrow?

OT: There are always places you can do better, but what we have been doing this afternoon was quite impressive in places, I would say. I can't say we could have done a lot more, but there is always perfection. But in rallying to get the perfection is always a bit tricky.

Are you going to need perfection tomorrow though against the man next to you who is at home, with that extra expectation on his shoulders? He's going to be pushing but you know how to win here, you've done it twice before. How much of a tough cookie is he going to be tomorrow?

OT: What is tough cookie? I mean, there is no question it needs to have a perfection tomorrow and also there is no question he will push and if he's speaking much about the championship I guess he doesn't have a lot to lose. So he will go for it and we will need to go for it as well. Obviously there are stages we know and have done quite a few times, so let's see. I'm pretty sure it will be quite tight.

I'm hoping it will be a thrilling battle. Are you going to take all of the risks to get this win? Is it win it or bin it tomorrow?

OT: It's been like this since the first corner, so nothing will change tomorrow!

Kalle, you moved from fourth position up to second today, it's been a really strong afternoon from you. You told me this morning you weren't so comfortable with the car in the morning stages. That seemed to change in the afternoon though.

KR: Yeah, the morning was not the best. I didn't really feel just perfect with the car. In the afternoon it was a bit better, so I could be a bit comfortable and not so all over the place all the time.

You set a joint fastest time with Ott, it's really hard to catch this man, but you want to win at home. You've got all your fans expecting you tomorrow to be on the top step. Is that a little bit of extra pressure or motivation?

KR: I think it's more motivation for me. It has been like this the whole weekend, everybody cheering a lot and of course when you see the amount of people on the stages and also get the videos and stuff from the stages the people are going crazy. So of course it's nice to drive. We want to try and have a good fight tomorrow for all the fans to see and at the end of the day we will see where we end up.

I'm sure you want to be on the top step, but how much do you want to risk? You have a great points advantage in the championship right now, you are on the brink of winning the title this year. You told me at the start of the week you don't want to destroy that points advantage. He's going to pretty much risk everything tomorrow. Are you?

KR: To be honest I think I'm not going to do the same full risk as him. Of course, even if we are second our points lead is actually growing in the championship and for me that would be perfect. But in front of all these people you don't get to say that, so we try our best.

Esapekka, it's still a podium position for you right now, I can sense the disappointment from the distance I'm standing away from you. You were ready for the fight this afternoon but a rock into your windscreen had other ideas. How are you feeling right now?

EL: Well at least I'm still on the podium, so we need to think positive. I don't know if it was really possible to catch him and Kalle has been really fast. I wanted to stay close but now I'm not close! But anyway that was some bad luck, I have to say. I haven't seen the video yet, but I heard it bounced back from the tree, this rock. I don't know what I've done wrong to deserve this kind of luck. Let's see, maybe I'll have good luck tomorrow.

At least not in a battle with these two you can have a little bit more fun out on the stages tomorrow. We've seen some fun with you and Janne today, some hot moments, some slides especially in the morning.

EL: Yeah there was, many moments to be fair. But I don't want to repeat those tomorrow. When you are in this situation and there is a gap in front and also to the rear, I don't know what we should do. Tomorrow morning we should just drive normally probably, but that's not so easy in the end and then to try and step up with the speed on the Power Stage. But it's not so easy when you are not in the fight.

These guys are in the fight tomorrow. So which way is it going to go?

EL: Which way...? KALLE! KALLE!

You know what it's like to win here, but being on the podium at your home event is a special thing.

EL: It is, it's always special and that's why I'm still happy. It's a home rally and definitely you want to be there and give something back for the big crowd. I want to be there tomorrow.