



preview

22.04.2015

WORLD RX CREWS PREPARE FOR 2015 SEASON-OPENER IN PORTUGAL **Round 1 – Rallycross of Portugal**












This weekend marks the opening round of the 2015 FIA World Rallycross Championship presented by Monster Energy where a total of 52 cars including 21 Supercars armed with 600 brake horsepower will go head-to-head in Portugal. Among the line-up of drivers competing is reigning World RX Champion Petter Solberg, who won the event last year.

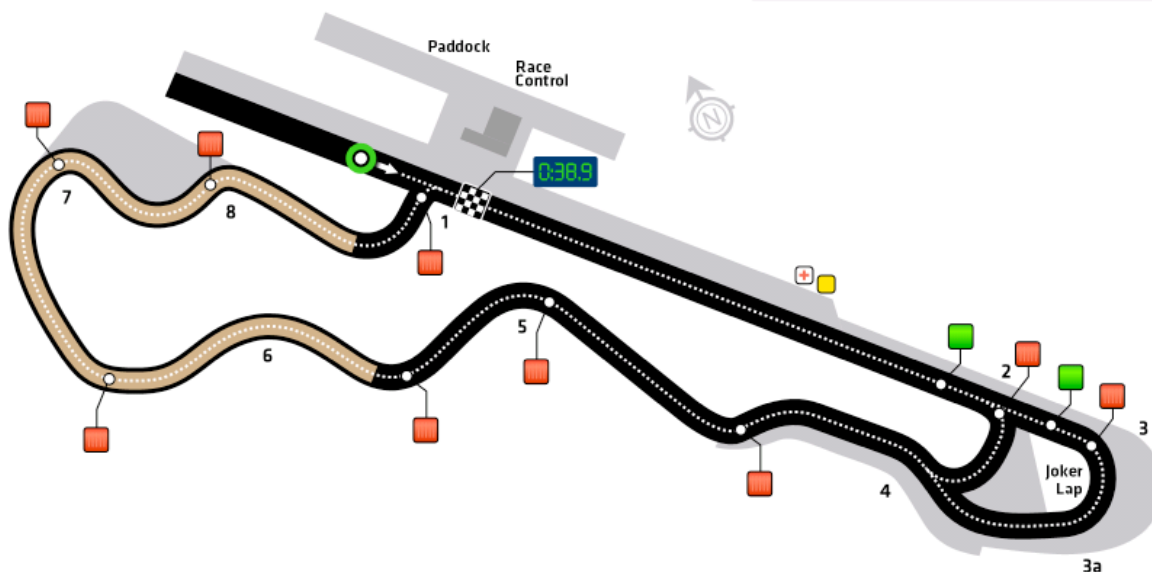
Bompiso Rallycross of Portugal takes place in the sleepy town of Montalegre and is located in the hills of the Vila region, close to Spanish border. The circuit presents an interesting challenge for not only the drivers – but the engineers too. At 1800 metres above sea level, engines need to be finely tuned to deal with the high altitude.

Now in its second year as an FIA World Championship, World RX continues to grow in popularity with eight permanent two-car teams - up from six in 2014 - plus two full-time independent entries. The 18 permanent World RX drivers will also be joined by a series of wildcard entrants and local drivers throughout the season.

Martin Anayi, World RX Managing Director for IMG, commented: “Last year was a very promising start to our World Championship: we travelled to four continents, visited five new venues and created a two-hour live TV product from 12 events. This year, we’ve successfully introduced two new venues, added more teams, secured new sponsors and brokered new TV deals. With worldwide exposure on the likes of Top Gear, we’ve started our 2015 season on a high and now we must continue this momentum to grow competitor entries, spectator numbers and TV audience figures. There’s no denying that interest in rallycross as a sport is burgeoning: we have several new circuit designs on the table for the development of purpose-built rallycross facilities around the globe. Coupled with the steady base of drivers coming through into rallycross, the future of the sport – both at a national and at World Championship level – is looking very positive.”

CIRCUIT INFORMATION

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|------------------------|------------------------|----------------------|-------------------------------------|--------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| ROUND 01 | RALLYCROSS OF PORTUGAL | FASTEST LAPS: | 2014 | KEY  Braking  High Speed  Start  Finish  Circuit  Route  Medical & Recovery Vehicles  Fire & Rescue Vehicles  Run-off Areas  Dirt Track  Marshals |
| RACE DATE: | 25 APR 2015 | PRACTICE: | 0:39.340 Petter Solberg, Citroën | |
| CIRCUIT NAME: | MONTALEGRE CIRCUIT | FINAL: | 0:39.939 Petter Solberg, Citroën | |
| ASPHALT / DIRT: | 60% / 40% | | | |
| CIRCUIT LENGTH: | 1.520KM | | | |



THE TEAMS & DRIVERS

SDRX. Solberg and Britain's Liam Doran have teamed up under the new-for-2015 SDRX banner in a pair of Monster Energy backed Citroen DS3 Supercars. Both drivers have made tweaks to their car's chassis, engine and suspension over the season break and have spent the last few days testing in Lousada (Portugal) in preparation for this weekend.

Solberg commented: "Defending the drivers' title and pushing for a team championship under SDRX feels like a dream come true. I will of course continue with my engineers and mechanics to push as hard as I can to retain my title. We have developed the car extensively, and I can't wait to get out on track. We, as SDRX are a private team, but we have everything it takes and more to give the factory teams a huge fight for the main trophies."

Doran added: "It's hard to express how much I am looking forward to getting back to racing this year. It's been a rollercoaster ride over the past 12 months, and now it's time to put it all behind us and get back to racing and winning! Working alongside Petter is going to be a great experience. His name and achievements go before him, and I think the dynamic between us will work really well."

Ford Olsbergs MSE. Last year's World RX Teams' Championship winners Ford Olsbergs MSE will return this season with young guns Reinis Nitiss and Andreas Bakkerud. Nitiss won the Norwegian RX round in 2014 while Bakkerud took two event victories (Turkey and UK).

Marklund Motorsport. Topi Heikkinen – runner-up in last year's Drivers' Championship – will return to Swedish based squad Marklund Motorsport this year. Heikkinen, who won the Belgian RX race, will be joined by former WRC driver PG Andersson in the team's second Polo RX Supercars.

Team Peugeot-Hansen. Run by multiple European Rallycross Champion Kenneth Hansen, the 2015 Team Peugeot-Hansen line-up includes Timmy Hansen, who won his first World RX event in Italy last year. He is joined by the 2013 European Rallycross Vice-Champion Davy Jeanney in the team's second Peugeot 208 WRX Supercar.

Volkswagen Team Sweden. Another new team in World RX, Volkswagen Team Sweden will be headed up by Sweden's Johan Kristofferson, who scored a podium in Belgium last year. Norway's Tord Linnerud, an accomplished rally and Touring Car driver will also drive for the team. Both drivers will pilot Volkswagen Polo RX Supercars.

EKS. After entering selected rounds in 2014, EKS have returned in 2015 as a full World Championship team. Double DTM Champion Mattias Ekstrom will compete at the majority of events with GT racer Edward Sandstrom to step in for Ekstrom at Hockenheim RX. Anton Marklund has switched from Marklund Motorsport in 2015 and will drive the team's second Audi S1 Quattro.

ALL-INKL.COM Muennich Motorsport. Another new team in World RX, the Muennich Motorsport outfit is headed up by Rene Muennich – team chief and driver when Muennich Motorsport won the 2012 FIA GT1 World Championship. Driving the team's second Audi S3 RX Supercar is Sweden's Alx Danielsson – a former NASCAR driver and winner of the 2006 Formula Renault 3.5 Series.

World RX Team Austria. The fourth new team to enter World RX this year is run by Austrian entrepreneur, Max Pucher, who will also drive for the squad. He will be joined by former WRC star Manfred Stohl. Both Austrians will drive Ford Fiesta RX Supercars.

Permanent entries. Timur Timerzyanov and Robin Larsson will start their 2015 World RX campaigns in Portugal as individual World Championship entrants. Both drivers will be serious contenders for this year's Drivers' Championship having previously won the highly-competitive European Rallycross Championship (Timerzyanov in 2012/2013 and Larsson last year).

Other entrants. Jean-Baptiste Dubourg – who finished runner-up in last year's French Rallycross Championship – will drive a Citroen C4 Supercar in Portugal with a new engine from French company, Oreca. Two Portuguese drivers will also compete in front of their home crowd: Joaquim Santos in a Ford Focus and Mario Barbosa in a Citroen DS3.

Super1600. As well as the headline Supercar category, there are also 21 Super1600 entrants in Portugal this weekend representing 14 different nationalities. Russia's Nikita Misyulya and Latvia's Janis Baumanis, who finished second and third respectively in S1600 last year, will both be hungry to take the first victory of 2015. The line-up also includes female driver Mandie August – one of three women competing in Montalegre.

New for 2015. The FIA European Rallycross Championship will continue to run at five World RX events as in 2014. All Supercars will race together through the heat stages but after heat four, two separate Intermediate Classification tables will be issued, separating the European and World Championship competitors for their own semi-finals and finals. The move will allow both European and World

Championship protagonists to race on track for victory in their respective championships, and also provide a clear progression from European level to World competition.

European Championship categories Super1600 and TouringCar have unique calendars for 2015, that best suit the budget and ability of the respective competitors. Super1600 will race at seven of the European based rounds, with TouringCar at five events, the latter focused on its Nordic and north-European heartland. The RX Lites Cup will also join World RX at eight events this season.

World RX will visit two new venues in 2015, both of which are renowned for hosting some of the most famous sporting events in Europe. Hockenheim in Germany will stage the second round of the Championship directly after Portugal (1-3 May) in a weekend of motorsport action that will include the highly-acclaimed DTM series. The new RX circuit is being constructed inside the final section of the famous German track, in the Sachs Arena. Later in the World RX season, the Circuit de Barcelona-Catalunya, home to the Spanish F1 race, will form the all-new Barcelona RX.

Championship promoter IMG has begun the process of controlling costs for teams and drivers competing in World RX and maximising the cost benefit ratio. An agreement has been made with World Championship teams that outside of official test days, testing will be restricted to four days and no more than 40 laps per day.

EVENT FORMAT

Each event will comprise of practice sessions, four qualifying heats, two semi-finals and one final. There will be four qualifying heats with a maximum of five cars starting abreast in each race over four laps.

HEAT 1:

Starting positions in the races will be determined by a draw that will be carried out beforehand.

HEAT 2:

Race starters determined according to classification of heat 1. This follows the same format until heat 4. All qualifying heats will be timed and the fastest driver in each heat will be rewarded 50 points, second: 45, third: 42, fourth: 40, fifth: 39, sixth: 38 and so on. After the qualifying heats, there will be an intermediate classification according to each driver's total points scored in the four heats.

SEMI-FINALS:

There will be six starters arranged on a two-by-two grid and each semi-final will be run over six laps. The top 12 scoring drivers in the intermediate classification will qualify for the semi-finals. The winner, second and third placed drivers in each semi-final will qualify for the final.

FINALS:

Finals will also have six starters, arranged over three rows and will be run over six laps. The semi-final winner with the highest number of points in the event will start on the 'pole' side of the grid, followed by the other semi-final winner. The same procedure will be used between the two second-placed drivers and two third-placed drivers. The winner of the final will be the winner of the event. Positions one to six in the final classification will be according to the result of the final. The remaining drivers will be classified according to points scored in the event.

JOKER LAPS:

An alternative section of track that adds at least two seconds to the lap time, and through which every driver must pass once in each race, semi-final and final. Failure to take the Joker Lap is penalised by 30-seconds in the qualifying heats, and by being classified last and loss of points in a semi-final or final.

EVENT SCHEDULE

Day 1:

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| 07:00 | Gates Open To Public |
| 11:00 | Cross Kart Practice |
| 11:30 | RX Open Practice |
| 13:35 | Circuit Stunt Show |
| 14:00 | RX Heat 1 + 2 // S1600 Heat 3 |
| 18:00 | Fan Zone Autograph Session |

Day 2:

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|-------|-----------------------------------------------------|
| 07:00 | Gates Open To Public |
| 09:00 | RX Warm Up |
| 10:00 | Circuit Stunt Show |
| 10:30 | RX Heat 3+4 // S1600 Semi Final // Cross Kart Final |
| 14:00 | RX Lites Semi Final // S1600 Final |
| 14:55 | Air Stunt Show |
| 15:00 | Supercar Semi-Finals // Supercar+Lites Finals |

FIA WORLD RALLYCROSS CHAMPIONSHIP CLASSIFICATIONS

The provisional classifications for all the Championship can be found on the following link:

<http://www.fia.com/events/world-rallycross-championship/season-2015/event-details>

FIA WORLD RALLYCROSS CHAMPIONSHIP

Shortly after the finish of the sessions, results of the event can be found on the following link:

<http://www.fia.com/events/world-rallycross-championship/season-2015/2015-standings>