



preview

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WORLD RX GEARS UP FOR BIGGEST EVENT OF THE SEASON Round 8 – Rallycross of France

Round eight of the FIA World Rallycross Championship presented by Monster Energy will take place at Loheac in France this weekend (6-7 September) as the FIA's newest World Championship prepares for its most highly-anticipated event on the 12-round calendar. With crowds of more than 70,000 people at last year's event, this year's Loheac RX promises to be no less spectacular with 37 flame-spitting Supercars and star drivers including American Gymkhana star Ken Block.

The original home of rallycross in France, Loheac is located in Brittany in the north-west of the country. At 1088 metres long and made up of 67% gravel, the Loheac circuit is perfectly designed with a joker half-way through the lap and an artificial banking to give spectators a fantastic view of the bumper-to-bumper racing. Loheac itself is set 20 miles south-west of the city of Rennes with a population of 600 people. The small town is a mecca for motorsport fans and is also known for its spectacular automotive museum which is home to more than 400 vehicles. A total of 79 cars including 32 French drivers from across the Supercar, TouringCar and Super1600 categories will compete at Loheac.

A firm favourite to win World RX of France is current championship leader Petter Solberg who finished runner-up in Loheac last year. To help with his pre-event preparations, Solberg is testing his Citroen DS3 Supercar this week in a bid to find the perfect set-up. "The surface in Loheac isn't like gravel as we know it. It's a really hard surface and if it's hot weather then the whole surface can feel like asphalt," explained the former WRC Champion who be partnered by Italian driver Simone Romagna in his two-car PSRX team. "This is a track where you have to drive neat and tidy, but that's tough when the cars are all so close around you. One guy who I'm sure will be close around us is Ken Block. It's great to see Ken back, he's a real character and like me in that he understands that you have to show some emotion in what we are doing."

Block, who makes his eagerly-awaited World RX return following his podium at Hell RX earlier this year, echoed Solberg's comments: "I always look forward to competing against Petter," admitted the American who has amassed millions of views thanks to his online Gymkhana series on YouTube. Block will drive his Hoonigan Racing Division Ford Fiesta for the first time in Loheac and has prepared for the event by watching in-car videos and competing in an RX race in Daytona back in the States. Block added: "These rallycross cars are a lot of fun as a driver since they're putting so much power down through all four wheels, so I'd say I'm looking forward to getting behind the wheel again and racking up some more seat time on a great circuit."

Second in the driver standings following a consistent points-scoring approach this season is Volkswagen Marklund driver Topi Heikkinen. The 23-year-old hasn't been to Loheac before but the challenge doesn't



faze him. "I've never been to Loheac but it doesn't bother me," said the confident Finn who is partnered by Sweden's Anton Marklund. "The car has been getting better and better, and that's going to continue for the rest of the season, so we've got a brilliant chance of fighting for victory in France and eventually taking the title. I'm going to grab the opportunity with both hands. It's flat-out from here on."

VW Marklund team principle Jan Marklund added: "In Canada we were running four cars: three came back by ferry and to save time we brought one back by airfreight. We have been carrying out a number of development tests to make improvements and keep momentum on our side. At the moment, Topi is second in the drivers' championship standings, Anton is fifth, and we're leading the teams' classification together with Ford Olsberg. We're determined to win both titles."

One team who is certain to challenge VW Marklund's quest for the teams' championship trophy is that of Ford Olsbergs MSE. Home to superstar drivers Reinis Nitiss and Andreas Bakkerud who are currently third and fourth in the World RX standings, both drivers have already won an event so far this season and are two of the Championship's hottest young prospects. Bakkerud also won last year's Loheac RX, beating the likes of nine-time World Rally Champion Sebastien Loeb, and will be hungry to take his second victory of the year.

Arguably the most eager of all the World RX teams to take a win in France will be Team Peugeot-Hansen. After two podium finishes on the previous two World RX rounds, the squad who is fronted by Russia's Timur Timerzyanov and Sweden's Timmy Hansen, will be keen to do one better this weekend and finish on the top step of the podium. Reigning European Rallycross Champion Timerzyanov commented: "The French round is a great race for all of the drivers, and of course for us as the Peugeot team. To race a French car in France is very special. I need to make up for not getting the result I wanted to there last year and we need to work hard to get the setup right to be like a circuit racing car there. We will be ready to fight for the first position. That's what I want."

Flying the flag for France in Loheac will be Monster Energy World RX Team's Davy Jeanney who finished third at last year's event and will be eager to help the team secure its first podium result of 2014. Jeanney will be partnered by Henning Solberg in a second Monster backed Citroen DS3 Supercar.

Former F1 World Champion Jacques Villeneuve is unable to compete at Loheac due to his F1 commentating commitments but will be replaced in the Albatec Racing team by Britain's David Binks. "After far too long away from racing, I'm extremely excited about being asked to step into Jacques' car and make my World RX debut at the most exciting event on the 2014 calendar," explained Binks who has been a regular on the British RX scene. "I've always had a very good relationship with Andy and the entire Albatec Racing team, so thank you to them for giving me this opportunity."

Team EKS RX returns to World RX for the fourth time this season and will be represented by reigning Junior World Rally Champion Pontus Tidemand as well as successful GT racer Edward Sandstrom who competed at World RX of Belgium back in July. Tidemand, who recently won the WRC2 category at WRC Rally Deutschland, spoke confidently after a comprehensive test in the Audi S1 Quattro over the summer: "EKS has been working hard to give me the best conditions possible and we are happy with the testing that we have done. Our development during the season has been very positive and I think we have good chances to succeed this weekend. I was close to finishing on the podium in Belgium and the next step is simply to get a result, which is what I'm aiming for in France."

Other notable entrants include reigning French Rallycross Champion Jerome Grosset-Janin who has spent the summer working on his fitness in the south of France. The 30-year-old was haunted by mechanical problems last year but was as fast as the top runners when the car was working properly. He now feels confident that he can put on a good show for his home fans this time round: “The Loheac track is similar to Lydden Hill or Hell in that it is perfectly designed for rallycross,” explained Grosset-Janin who will be joined in Loheac by fellow countrymen Fabien Pailler and JB Duborg who are both dominating the national championship. “The first time I competed there was in 2003 but if someone told me that 11 years later I would be back for the FIA World Rallycross Championship in the Supercar category, I wouldn’t have believed them. It is amazing how much the sport has progressed.”

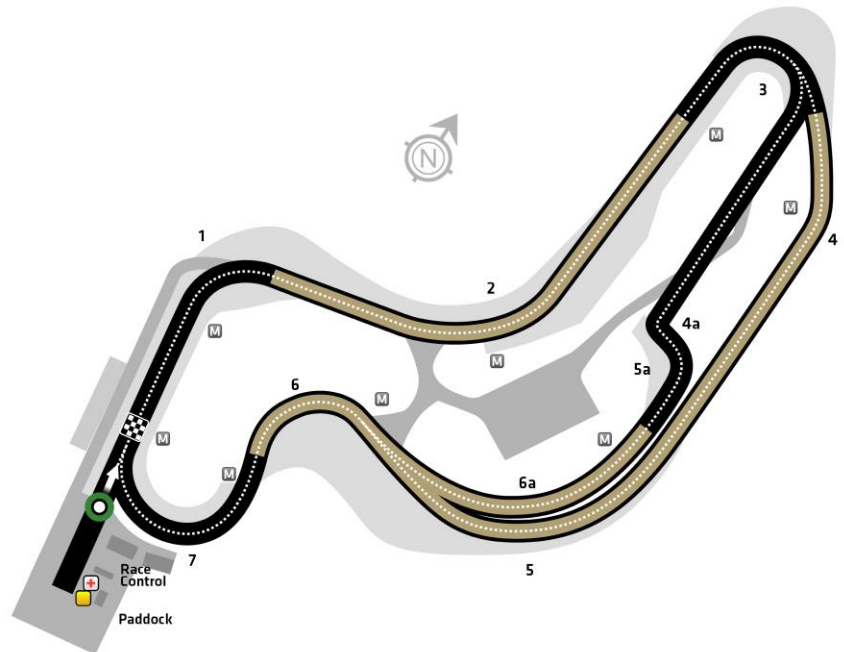
Martin Anayi – Managing Director for World RX at IMG Motorsport – concluded: “Sweden has been our biggest event so far this season but I have a feeling that Loheac will surpass it. Last year we had 74,000 fans at our French race and the organisers have built a new grandstand in preparation for this year’s event. With so many French drivers as well as superstar names such as Block competing at Loheac, I’m certain that this year’s event will be just as successful. We also have L’Equipe onsite with us over the weekend as they will be broadcasting the event live on French television on Sunday. Both the driver and teams’ championship titles remain wide open with VW Marklund and Ford Olsbergs MSE tied at the top of the standings so it will be interesting to watch which way the standings go after this weekend.”

CIRCUIT INFORMATION

Loheac

ROUND 8	
RACE DATE:	6-7 SEP 2014
CIRCUIT NAME:	LOHEAC CIRCUIT
CIRCUIT LENGTH:	1.088km
ASPHALT:	34%
DIRT:	66%

Start	Finish	Medical & Recovery Vehicles
Route	Dirt track	Fire & Rescue Vehicles
Circuit	Run-off Area	Marshal Station



Name:	Loheac Circuit
Length:	1.088 km
Composition:	34% Asphalt and 66% Dirt
Direction of the track:	Clockwise
Number of laps in the Qualifying Heats:	4 laps
Number of laps in Semi-Finals and Finals:	6 laps

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.

MEDIA INFORMATION/SCHEDULE OF EVENTS

Friday 5 September

1600 Drivers' Draw plus World RX press conference. This will be held in the IMG truck. Media are invited to attend this the draws are made for the race heats. After the draw, a pre-event press conference will be held with Ken Block, Petter Solberg, Davy Jeanney and Timur Timerzyanov.

Saturday 6 September

0800 Media sign-on opens.

0945 Photographers' briefing. All photographers arriving on Saturday MUST attend this short photographers' briefing which will be held in the media room. Photographers will be issued with a tabard after the briefing.

Sunday 7 September

- 0700 Media sign-on opens.
- 0945 Photographers' briefing. All photographers arriving on Sunday MUST attend this short photographers' briefing which will be held in the media room. Photographers will be issued with a tabard after the briefing.
- 1550 Podium and trophy presentations
- 1610 Press conference.

FIA WORLD RALLYCROSS CHAMPIONSHIP CLASSIFICATIONS

The provisional classifications for all the Championship can be found on the following link:
<http://www.fia.com/sport/championships/news/world-rallycross-championship>

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/championship/events/world-rallycross-championship/2014/loh-ac>