

Rallye Monte-Carlo - 20-24 January 2009

Seb Ogier Wins 77TH Monte Carlo Rally
 Meeke suffers 6th gear crash and is out of the event!
 Live FOOTAGE, Times and News!
 Full Event Details

SEBASTIEN OGIER WINS 77TH MONTE CARLO RALLY

Reigning Junior World Rally Champion Sebastien Ogier has won the 77th Monte Carlo Rally for the BFGoodrich Drivers' Team: the first time that the programme - which chooses a different local driver from the five rounds of the IRC on which it operates - has resulted in a rally winner.

Peugeot Belgium's Freddy Loix - the runner-up on last year's IRC series - got his 2009 campaign off to a solid start by finishing in a fault-free second on the Monte Carlo Rally, ahead of the Peugeot Total 207 S2000 entry driven by Le Mans star Stephane Sarrazin. Thanks to a magical atmosphere, challenging stages and typical weather, this year's Monte Carlo Rally well and truly lived up to its reputation as the oldest and most prestigious event in the sport.

Despite having no experience of Super 2000 machinery prior to a short test before his very first Monte Carlo Rally, Ogier took the lead at the end of the second day following a puncture for former rally leader Juho Hanninen. The Finn gave Skoda's new Fabia S2000 a spectacular IRC competition debut by claiming the lead on the opening morning, which he extended to more than a minute and a half before SS9: the final stage of day two. Hanninen then picked up a front puncture just five kilometres into the stage but chose to drive to the end, losing two minutes and dropping to third. He was confident that he could make the time back up, but crashed out on the very first corner of SS10: the first stage of Friday.

The same stage also claimed Irishman Kris Meeke, making his IRC debut along with Peugeot UK. Having set fastest time on SS3, the Irishman dropped around a minute on the second day with a puncture sustained after hitting a hole. On Friday morning though he lost control of his 207 S2000 after it slid onto a patch of slush. The car left the road in fifth gear and rolled five times, demolishing part of a bridge, but both Meeke and co-driver Paul Nagle emerged uninjured. A dramatic early retirement was that of Peugeot Belgium driver and reigning IRC champion Nicolas Vouilloz, who broke a steering arm on SS7 after a small impact.

As always, tyre choice was the key to the Monte Carlo Rally. With most stages containing a very wide variety of conditions it was normally a question of just finding the best compromise. One of the best examples was the final four stages through the Col de Turini this evening, which formed a dramatic climax to the 77th Monte Carlo Rally. Peugeot driver Stephane Sarrazin, who ran as high as second overall on the opening day, lost more than five minutes with an off on SS4: the opening stage of Thursday. Nonetheless, he steadily recovered throughout the remainder of the event to climb up the order.

The Frenchman gambled on his choice of tyres for the first loop of Col de Turini stages, selecting normal rain tyres instead of the snow tyres favoured by most people. This enabled him to claim third place by just one second from the other factory Skoda of Jan Kopecky, which performed strongly despite intermittent power steering problems. A storming run on the penultimate stage of the rally enabled him to claim fastest time by half a minute from Kopecky and seal his podium place. World rally star Toni Gardemeister - who has twice finished second in Monte Carlo - was set for second place until the alternator broke on his privateer Abarth Grande Punto with only three stages to go.

The factory Abarth team of Giandomenico Basso, Anton Alen and Luca Rossetti suffered mixed fortunes. Rossetti was out on the very first stage after sliding into a snowbank. The same fate awaited the 1994 World Rally Champion Didier Auriol, who put his privateer Peugeot off within metres of Rossetti.

The IRC 2WD Cup was comfortably won by Fiat Punto S1600 driver Manuel Villa

IRC RESULTS AFTER SS14, MONTE CARLO RALLY (MONACO)*

- 1 Ogier/Ingrassia (Peugeot 207 S2000) 4h40m45.7s
- 2 Loix/Smets (Peugeot 207 S2000) +1m43.6s
- 3 Sarrazin/Renucci (Peugeot 207 S2000) +2m21.6s
- 4 Kopecky/Stary (Skoda Fabia S2000) +3m17.3s
- 5 Basso/Dotta (Abarth Grande Punto S2000) +4m28.0s
- 6 Alen/Alanne (Abarth Grande Punto S2000) +10m49.7s
- 7 Romeyer/Fournel (Mitsubishi Lancer Evo 9) +20m30.0s
- 8 Burri/Gordon (Abarth Grande Punto S2000) +21m23.0s
- 9 Artru/Virieux (Mitsubishi Lancer Evo 9) +9m51.4s
- 10 Cavallini/Zanella (Peugeot 207 S2000) +28m44.2s

Two-wheel drive winner: Manuel Villa (Fiat Punto S1600)

*All results subject to final confirmation.

STANDINGS

Drivers

1 Ogier 10
 2 Loix 8
 3 Sarrazin 6
 4 Kopecky 5
 5 Basso 4
 6 Alen 3
 7 Romeyer 2
 8 Burri 1

Manufacturers

1 Peugeot 18
 2 Abarth 7
 3 Skoda 5
 4 Mitsubishi 2

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News from the event

Other News

Kris out of rally on SS10, accident. Crew OK. Car got on-top of slush in 6th gear, and basically aqua-planed. Rally leader Hanninen also out on first corner. Updated : By all accounts it was a very big accident near the start of SS10. The car rolled a few times, and Kris's was quite shaken up. The ice note crew have now collected Kris, and I will try and get an interview with him later today.

Kris has finished Day 2, 59s off the lead. A good day overall apart from the spare wheel coming lose and distracting Kris and caught a gully and getting a puncture dropping 1m12s. Vouilloz crashed outcand Hanniben had a puncture on last stage. All to play for tomorrow.

Irishman Kris Meeke making his IRC debut for Peugeot UK, is hoping for more snow on the second day of the Monte Carlo Rally today. The 29-year-old set fastest time on the third stage of the event yesterday, to lie sixth overall heading into day two today. ...

Despite limited testing time with his Peugeot 207 S2000, Meeke - a former protégé of the late Colin McRae - was quick to get to grips with his new car and the complex tyre choices involved in the Monte Carlo Rally.

"On stage three we were down at the bottom of the mountain and I looked up and said that the weather looks so white up there it must be going to snow," he said. "So we gambled on taking studded tyres. It turned out to be an awesome gamble and we got fastest time. By the time we got up the hill it was full snow, settling on the road deep and streaming past the windscreen."

Having enjoyed his first experience of driving on snow, Meeke is now hoping for more snow on today's six stages. "Believe it or not that was the first time I've ever driven a rally car on snow - and now I love it," he added. "This car is just brilliant to drive on the white stuff. In fact I hope all the stages today have snow on them. It might be so, according to the weather reports."

Overall results after SS6

1 Hanninen 1h47m39.5s
 2 Ogier +1m24.3s
 3 Loix +1m36.9s
 4 Meeke +2m07.2s
 5 Gardemeister +2m40.2s
 6 Vouilloz +2m53.5s
 7 Basso +4m28.7s
 8 Sarrazin +5m22.4s
 9 Kopecky +5m25.5s
 10 Alen +6m17.1s

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[Kris Meekes Blog \(Updated by brother Barry\)](#)

PRE EVENT NEWS

[Click here for Entry List in PDF format.](#)

Event Itinerary

Competition of elegance

It all began in 1911, at the height of the rivalry between two famous seaside towns : Nice and Monte-Carlo. The former organized its "carnaval" which attracted a rich clientele to its casinos and so Monaco decided to organize an automobile rally on the same lines as the celebrated Italian Cycle Rally ("convegni ciclisti"), with departure points in different european towns, converging on Monaco.

This event was to take place in January, as a way of showing that the climate of the Principality at this time of year was exceptionally mild. Today, two men are considered to be the founders of this rally : Gabriel Vialon and Antony Noghes. The Société des Bains de Mer (SBM) financed the event, which attracted only 23 participants in its first year. The following year, this figure had quadrupled: The Monte-Carlo Rally was launched !

Six months of preparation

In addition to the historical aspect, there is a hive of activity behind the scenes for as many as six months before the starting pistol. Efficient organisation is indispensable in order to ensure perfect coordination of the men and equipment needed: 1 000 policemen, 23 emergency doctors, 300 firemen, 142 marshals, 350 safety marshals (especially for the spectators. It will be responsible for keeping the public informed and for ushering them to areas specially provided for them), 60 emergency vehicles and 25 tow trucks. An incomplete list, but which gives an idea of the magnitude of the operation.

Between the first winner in 1911, driver Rougier, and the last in 2008, Sébastien Loeb, 76 recurrences of the Monte-Carlo Rally... 76 heart stopping moments and thousands of thrills for a top level sporting event.

[Event Website](#)