



FIA World Rally Championship (WRC), Rally Argentina

Narrow defeat in thrilling finale – Ogier and Mikkelsen on the podium in Argentina for Volkswagen

- **Second place – Sébastien Ogier/Julien Ingrassia narrowly miss out on victory**
- **74th podium for Polo R WRC: Andreas Mikkelsen/Anders Jæger finish third**
- **Impressive team effort enables Latvala/Anttila to pick up Manufacturer points**

Wolfsburg (24 April 2016). Narrow defeat in a thrilling showdown: Sébastien Ogier/Julien Ingrassia (F/F) extended their lead in the FIA World Rally Championship (WRC) with second place in Argentina. A dramatic finale saw the three-time world champions and championship leaders narrowly miss out to Hayden Paddon/John Kennard (NZ/NZ, Hyundai), who claimed their first win in the World Rally Championship. Andreas Mikkelsen/Anders Jæger (N/N), like Ogier/Ingrassia at the wheel of the Polo R WRC, rounded off a good team performance with third place. Volkswagen's winning run of twelve back-to-back victories came to an end in Argentina, after the team had gone 335 days undefeated. Ogier/Ingrassia and Mikkelsen/Jæger picked up podiums number 73 and 74 for the Polo R WRC in the car's 43rd rally since joining the series in 2013. The Polo R WRC won eleven of the 18 stages in Argentina.

A rally of extremes – fog, raw roads and lunar landscapes

The Rally Argentina is regarded as one of the toughest on the FIA World Rally Championship (WRC) calendar – and the 2016 race certainly enhanced this reputation. The surface was particularly coarse, with the subsurface stony in places but sandy in others. Meanwhile the route featured narrow, winding sections, as well as fast, flowing passages. And the dreaded fog on the iconic "El Condor" stage also made an appearance at this year's Rally Argentina. Furthermore, one of the biggest challenges around also returned to the World Rally Championship, in the form of the "Mina Clavero" stage, which resembles a lunar landscape. In 2016, it was made all the more demanding by a particularly rough and eroded route.

Outstanding effort – Ogier/Ingrassia extend their overall lead

Narrow defeat, despite an all-out attack: Sébastien Ogier/Julien Ingrassia put leaders Paddon/Kennard under pressure again over the course of the final stages. By the time they reached the closing Power Stage, they had reduced the deficit from 29.8 to 2.6 seconds. However, they were unable to maintain their challenge on the final stage of the rally, the demanding "El Condor". Despite this, the French duo did pick up a bonus point for finishing third on the classic stage. Second place was sufficient to extend their lead in the Drivers' and Co-Drivers' Championship. 39 points now separates them and the new second-place pairing of Paddon/Kennard.



Focussed and mature performance: Podium for Andreas Mikkelsen and Anders Jæger

Success, courtesy of a cunning plan: Andreas Mikkelsen and Anders Jæger were rewarded for a mature and serene display at the Rally Argentina. They opted not to go all-out at any cost, but to take only calculated risks – a strategy that paid dividends. Third place, their second podium of the season, earned them valuable points in the battle for the world championship. They are now fourth in the overall standings – 48 points behind Ogier/Ingrassia.

Valuable points for Volkswagen in the Manufacturers' World Championship – thanks to a mega job by the mechanics

On Saturday, whilst leading the rally, Jari-Matti Latvala/Miikka Anttila unfortunately hit a rock on stage 14. The car rolled several times, leaving their hopes of winning the race in tatters. The Volkswagen mechanics were presented with an enormous to-do list: a completely new tailgate, front and rear shock absorbers, bonnet, front windscreen, both mirrors, left and right fenders, all the antennas, and a new underride guard – on the outside. Seats, seat rails, harnesses, new HANS systems and helmets, front wishbone, front track rod, a complete rear axle, new cardan shafts, water cooler and intercooler, replace all the top mounts and shock absorbers, replace all the wheel mounts, drive shafts and wheel arch liners – on the inside of the Polo R WRC. Thanks to the joint efforts of the Volkswagen team, who repaired the Polo R WRC within the maximum three hours allowed, the Finnish duo were able to re-join the race on Sunday and to pick up two points towards the Manufacturers' Championship.

Quotes after day four of the Rally Argentina

Sébastien Ogier, Volkswagen Polo R WRC #1

"It is not usually a good feeling for a driver to be beaten by an opponent. This time, however, it is easier to accept. Hayden and I had exactly the same conditions out on the route: he went absolutely all-out on the Power Stage, and was simply better. Respect for that performance. For me, this will serve as a great motivation to once again give it my all at the coming rallies, in order to get back on the top step of the podium. The stages were extremely difficult and rough, which is possibly why I did not risk everything. Second place is still a fantastic result for Julien and me. We have extended our lead in the world championship standings."

Jari-Matti Latvala, Volkswagen Polo R WRC #2

"No question: to retire whilst leading is bitterly disappointing. This is not what we had in mind for the Rally Argentina. We hit a rock on the 14th stage of the rally, which broke something on the car and ended up with us rolling. However, despite our disappointment, the priority today was to help the team. My mechanics put in a remarkable effort to get the Polo R WRC back in the rally, and I wanted to reward them for that with some Manufacturer points



today. A track rod broke on the Power Stage, but we still made it to the finish and picked up two points."

Andreas Mikkelsen, Volkswagen Polo R WRC #9

"We had a plan from the outset, and stuck to it – and it paid off. As such, I am more than happy with third place – after all, this is my first podium finish here in Argentina. We expected the rally to be extremely tough, and that proved to be the case. The route was very rough. In places it was even more extreme than last year. We are proud to have mastered the rally and come away with third place. After leaving Mexico empty-handed, it was important to score points."

Jost Capito, Volkswagen Motorsport Director

"WRC rallies do not get more exciting than that – the Rally Argentina was a fantastic advertisement for our sport. Despite an outstanding effort from Sébastien Ogier and Julien Ingrassia, they came up just short. Congratulations to Hayden Paddon and John Kennard, who were worthy winners. However, we are not in the slightest disappointed: as well as Sébastien and Julien, Andreas Mikkelsen and Anders Jæger also did everything right in third place. Jari-Matti Latvala and Miikka Anttila were unlucky to hit a rock whilst leading yesterday. The impact broke something on the car and resulted in it rolling. Thanks to the impressive efforts of our mechanics, they were able to re-join the race today and score points towards the Manufacturers' World Championship."

And then there was ...

... once around the world in "stage mode" – plus 151.15 kilometres. On the Sunday morning of the Rally Argentina, Sébastien Ogier, Jari-Matti Latvala and Andreas Mikkelsen completed a total of 39,986 kilometres of special stage – plus another six stages – with the Polo R WRC since the world rally car from Wolfsburg made its debut at the 2013 Rally Monte Carlo. That is the equivalent of once around the planet – and at rally speed. For comparison: the total number of kilometres against the clock amounted to 4,393.29 in 2015.

FIA World Rally Championship (WRC), Rally Argentina – Final Results*

01. Hayden Paddon/John Kennard (NZ/NZ), Hyundai, 3h 40m 52.9s
02. Sébastien Ogier/Julien Ingrassia (F/F), Volkswagen, + 14.3s
03. Andreas Mikkelsen/Anders Jæger (N/N), Volkswagen, + 1m 05.2s
04. Dani Sordo/Marc Martí (E/E), Hyundai, + 1m 17.1s
05. Mads Østberg/Ola Fløene (N/N), Ford, + 4m 56.7s
06. Thierry Neuville/Nicolas Gilsoul (B/B), Hyundai, + 9m 29.5s



- 07. Marcos Sebastián Ligato/Rubén García (RA/RA), Citroën, + 9m 39.2s
- 08. Eric Camilli/Benjamin Veillas (F/F), Ford, + 10m 16.0s
- 09. Henning Solberg/Ilka Minor (N/A), Ford, + 10m 48.5s
- 10. Nicolás Fuchs/Fernando Mussano (PE/RA), Škoda, + 24m 42.8s

FIA World Rally Championship (WRC), Rally Argentina – Power Stage Results

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| 01. Hayden Paddon/John Kennard (NZ/NZ), Hyundai | 13m 08.0s |
| 02. Dani Sordo/Marc Martí (E/E), Hyundai | + 11.2s |
| 03. Sébastien Ogier/Julien Ingrassia (F/F), Volkswagen | + 11.7s |

FIA World Rally Championship (WRC), Overall Standings*

Drivers' Championship

1. Sébastien Ogier, 96 points; 2. Hayden Paddon, 57; 3. Mads Østberg, 52; 4. Andreas Mikkelsen, 48; 5. Dani Sordo, 44; 6. Jari-Matti Latvala, 27; 7. Ott Tänak, 24; 8. Thierry Neuville, 23; 9. Stéphane Lefebvre, 10; 10. Henning Solberg, 8

Co-drivers' Championship

1. Julien Ingrassia, 96 points; 2. John Kennard, 57; 3. Ola Fløene, 52; 4. Anders Jæger, 48; 5. Marc Martí, 44; 6. Miikka Anttila, 27; 7. Raigo Molder, 24; 8. Nicolas Gilsoul, 23; 9. Gabin Moreau, 10; 10. Ilka Minor, 8

Manufacturers' Championship

1. Volkswagen Motorsport, 117 points; 2. Hyundai Motorsport, 81; 3. M-Sport, 62; 4. Hyundai Motorsport N, 49; 5. Volkswagen Motorsport II, 45; 6. DMACK, 30; 7. Jipocar Czech National Team, 6; 8. Yazeed Racing, 0

* Provisional.

Note to editors

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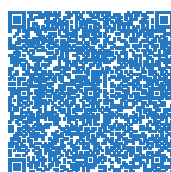
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