

25 June 2016

DAY REPORT: 2016 FIA European Rally Championship, round 5 of 10
Kenotek by CID LINES Ypres Rally 2016
Leg two, Saturday 25 June

Eleventh heaven for Loix with victory on closely-fought ERC Ypres Rally

Freddy Loix won the Kenotek by CID LINES Ypres Rally for a record-extending 11th time after a close battle with several other drivers on the classic FIA European Rally Championship event.

A fast start to the second leg in Belgium put MICHELIN-equipped ŠKODA Fabia R5 driver Loix into the lead on SS8 Kemmelberg 1 past day one pace-setter Bryan Bouffier, who remained well in victory contention over the next three stages before stopping on a road section with a gearbox problem on his Gemini Clinic Rally Team Citroën DS3 R5.

That didn't ease the pressure on Loix though, because Stéphane Lefebvre was on a charge. Starting the day in fifth place, 31.7 seconds off the lead, the Citroën-driving World Rally Championship ace and 2014 ERC Junior champion won the first six stages of the day to climb to second and slash the gap to Loix to just 5.3s. However, just when it looked as if he might move into the lead, he stopped on SS14 (the second run over the event's longest stage, Hollebeke) with a broken gearbox of his own. The only consolation for the Frenchman was the Colin McRae ERC Flat Out Trophy.

All this gave Loix a margin of 45.8s going into the final loop of three stages, stretching it to 56.8s en route to his 11th Ypres win in total and fourth in a row.

Kris Princen took second in his Peugeot Belgium Luxembourg 208 T16, up from fourth at the start of the day. He lost some time when he spun on SS12 Westouter-Boeschepe 1 but fought back with a stage win on SS14 to take climb to second as Lefebvre retired.

Bernd Casier completed an all-Belgian podium in a Ford Fiesta R5 with a long-awaited top-three finish on the event after four previous fourth places. A late burst of speed helped him to move ahead of Vincent Verschueren by just 0.3s on the penultimate stage, and he then won the final stage to make sure of the result.

Verschueren won two stages on leg one in his Fabia R5 but had a much tougher second day, not feeling well during the afternoon and making some mistakes. That included a spin on the final stage that dropped him to fifth behind Dutch driver Hermen Kobus, who took two stage wins on the final loop in his Fabia R5.

Eight-time Belgian champion Pieter Tsjoen (Fiesta R5) put a run of recent bad luck in Ypres behind him to have a trouble-free second day and climb to sixth. ERC regular Jaromír Tarabus (Fabia R5) battled throughout the second day with Claudie Tanghe (Fiesta R5) – running first on the road – and got past the local driver for seventh on the last stage. Up-and-coming Belgian Kevin Demaerschalk's rally could hardly have started worse when he lost over three minutes when he had to change a tyre on the first stage, but he recovered to take ninth in his DS3 R5 in front of ERC stalwart Antonín Tlusták (Fabia R5).

Didier Duquesne broke two wheels on his Fabia R5 with a spin on the same stage but made it to the finish in 11th. In 12th was 1994 ERC champion Patrick Snijers, who had a tough time in his new 208 T16 on an event he won four times in the past but rose from outside the top 30 over the final six stages. Jaroslav Orsák's chances of a second top-five finish from as many starts in his brand new Fiesta R5 were hit firstly by a puncture on SS9 and then an off on SS14, while Dávid Botka was forced to stop with a mechanical issue on his DS3 R5.

After his first-stage crash, ERC title contender Alexey Lukyanuk (Fiesta R5) restarted on leg two with a chance of some leg points, but made it no further than SS9. Having run out of fuel in his Fabia R5 on SS2, Ghislain De Mevius returned to post three top-five stage times on the final loop.

As usual, prize money was distributed to the top seven ERC finishers, totalling €20,000. With the championship now reaching its halfway point after five rounds, a total of €100,000 has been given away so far.

Trouble-free VIP debut for new Hyundai R5 challenger

The new Hyundai i20 R5 completed a trouble-free public debut as a VIP car at the front of the field in Ypres in the capable hands of ERC graduates Kevin Abbring and Seb Marshall. Abbring was delighted with the reliability and performance of the car, which will now undergo further testing ahead of a planned homologation in September in readiness for deliveries to customers, with the ERC a clear target market.

ERC Junior Experience begins

The ERC Junior Experience got underway in Ypres. This is a learning programme based around three rallies, which gives prospective drivers experience of the ERC Junior Championship through a series of recces and specialised on-event courses, which in Ypres included pace notes and media training.

Griebel sees off Ingram to end his wait for ERC Junior victory

Marijan Griebel finally claimed his first ERC Junior victory, 12 months after a final-stage puncture robbed him of the honours in Ypres. The German was made to work hard for it by Opel Rallye Junior team-mate Chris Ingram, with the gap remaining under 10 seconds until SS13. Ingram eventually finished 30.5s back but a third second-place from as many rounds in 2016 extends his points lead in the Pirelli-supplied category. Julius Tannert completed a 1-2-3 for the ADAC Opel Rallye Junior team. In fourth place, Dominik Brož (Ford Fiesta R2) took a third finish out of three in ERC Junior, followed by Peugeot 208 R2 drivers Joonas Tokee, Kristóf Klausz and debutant Catie Munnings. The 18-year-old picked up ERC Ladies' Trophy honours after Melissa Debackere crashed her R5 ŠKODA on the first stage of the day Łukasz Pieniżek dropped out of fourth on the penultimate stage with a problem on his Opel Adam R2, while Callum Devine's impressive ERC Junior debut ended after his similar car slid into a ditch on SS9. Nikolay Gryazin (208 R2) restarted and was fastest on SS11, but went no further.

Scattolon scoops an unlikely ERC2 win

A heavily-delayed Giacomo Scattolon unexpectedly claimed ERC2 honours for the first time. A couple of major delays for the Italian meant Tibor Érdi Jr appeared to be cruising to a second straight Ypres ERC2 win. A consistent run had lifted him to 14th overall before he went off on SS14 and into retirement.

Home driver Geusens takes third in ERC3

Belgian driver Polle Geusens (Fiesta R2T) showed well against the ERC Junior drivers in the ERC3 rankings throughout, setting the best time in SS9 and finishing third in the class. László Német took fifth in his 208 R2. Acropolis class winner Murat Bostanci started the second day ahead of the Hungarian but had a troublesome day and finished up ninth behind the restarted Gergely Fogasy.

TOP 10 POSITIONS (after 18 stages, 250.16 kilometres)

1. Freddy Loix (BEL)/Johan Gitsels (NED) ŠKODA Fabia R5....2h22m15.1s
2. Kris Princen (BEL)/Peter Kaspers (BEL) Peugeot 208 T16....+56.8s
3. Bernd Casier (BEL)/Pieter Vyncke (BEL) Ford Fiesta R5....+1m19.8s
4. Hermen Kobus (NED)/Erik de Wild (NED) ŠKODA Fabia R5....+1m27.0s
5. Vincent Verschueren (BEL)/Veronique Hostens (BEL) ŠKODA Fabia R5....+1m32.3s
6. Pieter Tsjoen (BEL)/Eddy Chevaillier (BEL) Ford Fiesta R5....+2m29.9s
7. Jaromír Tarabus (CZE)/Daniel Trunkát (CZE) ŠKODA Fabia R5....+2m49.2s
8. Claudie Tanghe (BEL)/Filip Cuvelier (BEL) Ford Fiesta R5+2m52.0s
9. Kevin Demaerschalk (BEL)/Bram Eelbode (BEL) Citroën DS3 R5....+5m45.9s
10. Antonín Tlusták (CZE)/Ladislav Kučera (CZE) ŠKODA Fabia R5....+7m46.0s

FIA ERC2: Giacomo Scattolon (ITA)/Paolo Zanini (ITA) Mitsubishi Lancer Evolution IX

FIA ERC3: Marijan Griebel (DEU)/Stefan Kopczyk (DEU) Opel Adam R2

FIA ERC Junior: Marijan Griebel (DEU)/Stefan Kopczyk (DEU) Opel Adam R2R2

Colin McRae ERC Flat Out Trophy: Stéphane Lefebvre (Citroen)

RALLY LEADERS

SS1-SS7: Bryan Bouffier

SS8-SS17: Freddy Loix

STAGE WINNERS

Day one (Friday 24 June, 80.36 kilometres):

SS1: Dikkebus 1 (12.61kms): Bouffier/Érdi/Ingram/Ingram

SS2: Wijtschate 1 (13.81kms): Lefebvre/Érdi/Griebel/Griebel

SS3: Mesen 1 (7.48kms): Verschueren/Érdi/Griebel/Griebel

SS4: Langemark (12.65kms): Lefebvre/Érdi/Griebel/Griebel

SS5: Dikkebus 2 (12.61kms): Bouffier/Érdi/Ingram/Ingram

SS6: Wijtschate 2 (13.81kms): Bouffier/Érdi/Griebel/Griebel

SS7: Mesen 2 (7.48kms): Verschueren/Érdi/Griebel/Griebel

Day two (Saturday 25 June, 169.80 kilometres):

SS8: Kemmelberg 1 (13.60kms): Lefebvre/Érdi/Ingram/Ingram

SS9: Hollebeke 1 (23.23kms): Lefebvre/Érdi/Geusens/Ingram

SS10: Reninge 1 (14.50kms): Lefebvre/Érdi/Ingram/Ingram

SS11: Watou 1 (14.29kms): Lefebvre/Érdi/Gryazin/Gryazin

SS12: Westouter-Boeschepe 1 (19.28kms): Lefebvre/Érdi/Griebel/Griebel

SS13: Kemmelberg 2 (13.60kms): Lefebvre/Érdi/Griebel/Griebel

SS14: Hollebeke 2 (23.23kms): Princen/Scattolon/Griebel/Griebel

SS15: Reninge 2 (14.50kms): Kobus/Scattolon/Griebel/Griebel

SS16: Watou 2 (14.29kms): Kobus/Scattolon/Ingram/Ingram

SS17: Westouter-Boeschepe 2 (19.28kms): Casier/Scattolon/Ingram/Ingram

KEY STATISTICS

ERC wins in 2016: Lukyanuk 1, Breen 1, Sirmacis 1, Moura 1, Loix 1.

ERC stage wins in 2016: Kajetanowicz 21, Lukyanuk 15, Lefebvre 8, Evans 6, Breen 4, Moura 3, Bouffier 3, Sirmacis 2, Verschueren 2, Kobus 2, Østberg 1, Monzón 1, Fisher 1, Loix 1, Princen 1, Casier 1.

CHAMPIONSHIP POSITIONS

Go to Fiaerc.com for the championship positions following round five of 10.

WATCH INSIDE ERC ON EUROSPORT – CHECK OUT THE WATCH IT ON TV SECTION OF FIAERC.COM FOR LOCAL BROADCAST DETAILS

WHAT'S NEXT?

auto24 Rally Estonia (Estonia), 15-17 July 2016: Fast, smooth gravel stages with crests commonplace. Based in Otepää in the south of the country. **More information:** rallyestonia.com **Media contact:** Margus Kiiver, margus@rallyestonia.ee, +372 56 641 068.

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