



Toyota Yaris WRC Posts Thrilling Performance on Rally Australia to Close First Championship Season

20 November 2017

Jari-Matti Latvala put in a fast-charging performance to challenge for victory on the closing day of Rally Australia yesterday (Sunday). The Finn came within 10 seconds of the lead in the final round of the 2017 FIA World Rally Championship, only for his hopes to be dashed with an off in the final Power Stage.

It remained for Esapekka Lappi to claim more points for the Toyota Gazoo Racing World Rally Team with a sixth place finish and third in the Power Stage.

In what was the first full year of competition for Toyota since returning to the championship after a break of 18 years, Latvala finished fourth in the drivers' championship. Toyota Gazoo Racing achieved third place in the manufacturers' title race on its debut, helped by notable victories in Sweden for Latvala and Finland for Lappi.

Reflecting on his performance in the rain-affected rally, Latvala said: "Obviously this is not the way that I wanted to end the year but this is rallying and you have to take the most and learn from every experience, even if it doesn't feel like a positive one at the time. I'd like to apologise for my mistake today after a huge effort from everyone here, and most of all say a big 'thank you' to the whole team for delivering a year that went beyond all my expectations."

Tommi Mäkinen, Team Principal, added: "I don't think anyone could have predicted how this rally would finish, but I don't think anyone could have predicted all the results we took this season either, so a huge thank you to everyone who made it possible. This disappointment shouldn't take away anything from what we have achieved this year, it's been a great performance overall. That doesn't mean we can relax; already we are working hard towards next year."

FINAL RESULT, RALLY AUSTRALIA

- 1 Thierry Neuville/Nicolas Gilsoul (Hyundai i20 Coupe WRC) 2h35m44.8s
- 2 Ott Tänak/Martin Jarveoja (Ford Fiesta WRC) +22.5s
- 3 Hayden Paddon/Seb Marshall (Hyundai i20 Coupe WRC) +59.1s
- 4 Sebastien Ogier/Julien Ingrassia (Ford Fiesta WRC) +2m27.7s
- 5 Elfyn Evans/Daniel Barritt (Ford Fiesta WRC) +3m05.6s
- 6 Esapekka Lappi/Janne Ferm (Toyota Yaris WRC) +3m49.5s**
- 7 Kris Meeke/Paul Nagle (Citroen C3 WRC): +22m58.4s
- 8 Richie Dalton/John Allen (Skoda Fabia R5) +24m39.6s

9 Nathan Quinn/Ben Searcy (Mitsubishi Lancer Evo IX) +25m03.4s

10 Dean Herridge/Sam Hill (Subaru Impreza WRX STi) +29m52.3s

Retired Jari-Matti Latvala/Miikka Anttila (Toyota Yaris WRC)

2017 FIA World Rally Championship for drivers after round 13:

1 Sebastien Ogier 232

2 Thierry Neuville 208

3 Ott Tänak 191

4 Jari-Matti Latvala 136

5 Elfyn Evans 128

6 Dani Sordo 95

7 Kris Meeke 77

8 Hayden Paddon 74

9 Juho Hänninen 71

10 Craig Breen 64

11 Esapekka Lappi 62

2017 FIA World Rally Championship for manufacturers after round 13:

1 M-Sport World Rally Team 428

2 Hyundai Motorsport 345

3 TOYOTA GAZOO Racing WRT 251

4 Citroen Total Abu Dhabi World Rally Team 218