



Tanak Misses Out on Hat-Trick But Takes Championship Lead on Rally Italy

17 June 2019

Ott Tänak was cruelly denied of a third straight victory on the final stage of Rally Italia Sardegna yesterday (Sunday), but brought his Yaris WRC home ahead of his principal rivals to take the lead in the Drivers' Championship.

The Toyota Gazoo Racing World Rally Team driver had put in a dominant performance throughout the weekend in intense heat and dusty conditions in Sardinia. He took the lead on Saturday with a clean sweep of stage wins and going into the final day's action he was 25.9 seconds clear of the field. Disaster struck on the final Power Stage when steering problems lost him and co-driver Martin Järveoja more than two minutes, demoting them to fifth place.

Nonetheless, his points score moved him to the top of the drivers' rankings, four points ahead of Sébastien Ogier as the championship begins its summer break.

Tänak said: "Everybody put so much effort in for this event and in the end to lose it in this way is really a shame. I'm sure that the team will work hard to solve the problem, and we will keep fighting. It's been a tough season so far but the championship situation is much better than it was at the same time last year. Now it's time to have some rest and be away from rallying for a bit, and then it's back to business."

Tänak's team-mate, Ulsterman Kris Meeke, ended the rally in eighth position, having lost time with a wheel change on Saturday's final test. In the third Yaris WRC, Jari-Matti Latvala lost more than eight minutes when he rolled his car on the sixth stage of the event, then was forced to retire after going off-road at the end of the day. Re-starting on Saturday, he battled on to the finish, posting fourth quickest time in the concluding Power Stage.

The championship battle will resume with Rally Finland at the beginning of August. This is the fastest event on the WRC calendar, contested on smooth gravel roads with many jumps. Toyota Gazoo Racing World Rally Team have a great record on the event, winning for the past two years. The team's headquarters are located close to the rally service park in Jyväskylä.

FINAL CLASSIFICATION, RALLY ITALIA SARDEGNA

- 1 Dani Sordo/Carlos del Barrio (Hyundai i20 Coupe WRC) 3h32m27.2s
- 2 Teemu Suninen/Jarmo Lehtinen (Ford Fiesta WRC) +13.7s
- 3 Andreas Mikkelsen/Anders Jaeger-Amland (Hyundai i20 Coupe WRC) +32.6s
- 4 Elfyn Evans/Scott Martin (Ford Fiesta WRC) +33.5s
- 5 Ott Tänak/Martin Järveoja (Toyota Yaris WRC) +1m30.1s**

6 Thierry Neuville/Nicolas Gilsoul (Hyundai i20 Coupe WRC) +2m16.7s

7 Esapekka Lappi/Janne Ferm (Citroën C3 WRC) +2m59.6s

8 Kris Meeke/Seb Marshall (Toyota Yaris WRC) +4m40.1s

9 Kalle Rovanperä/Jonne Halttunen (Skoda Fabia R5) +8m24.6s

10 Jan Kopecky/Pavel Dresler (Skoda Fabia R5) +8m49.2s

19 Jari-Matti Latvala/Miikka Anttila (Toyota Yaris WRC) +20m36.0s

ENDS