



Tanak Takes World Rally Championship With Toyota

28 October 2019

Toyota Gazoo Racing World Rally Team driver Ott Tänak and his co-driver Martin Järveoja have claimed their first FIA World Rally Championship titles with a breathtaking finish on Rally Spain yesterday (27 October).

They are the first Estonians ever to achieve the feat, and Tänak has delivered Toyota its fifth WRC drivers' title – the first since Didier Auriol's success in 1994.

"It's hard to know what to say in this moment," said Tänak, "the pressure this weekend was on another level. This has been the target of my life. I knew I couldn't make any mistakes, but still I had to have a good result to make it happen. I pushed hard and in the end it paid off. I've had to overcome a lot in my career, so it's nice to finally achieve this. Thank you to the team, they have done a great job."

Tänak and Järveoja arrived in Spain, the penultimate round of the season, having won six of the year's 12 rallies so far, giving them a 28-point championship lead and the chance to seal the driver and co-drivers' titles. On Friday's opening day of the event – the only mixed gravel and asphalt event in the calendar – they were in fifth place overall, but four consecutive stage wins in the Yaris WRC on Saturday elevated them to third. On Sunday a superb run through the concluding Power Stage saw Tänak 3.6 seconds faster than anyone else, netting five bonus points and second place overall – enough to claim the championship.

Team Principal Tommi Mäkinen said: "This is a historic achievement and a big reward for the whole team for their hard work throughout the season to reach this target. There has been a lot of pressure for Ott this weekend. What he did on the Power Stage, to do what he needed to get the title, was absolutely amazing. The second place helps us in the manufacturers' championship as well."

Jari-Matti Latvala finished in fifth, scoring important points for the manufacturers' championship, which Toyota still has a chance of winning at the final round of the season in Australia. After retiring on Saturday morning following a crash, Kris Meeke returned to action on Sunday under restart rules but finished down the field.

Toyota Gazoo Racing Rally Challenge Program driver Takamoto Katsuta successfully completed his second event at the top level in a separately entered Yaris WRC. Once again he showed good pace, even though a technical issue slowed his progress on Saturday.

The season will conclude with Rally Australia, running from 14 to 17 November. This takes place on a variety of gravel roads, including tight and twisty forest tracks and fast, flowing routes across open

countryside.

AKIO TOYODA COMMENT ON 2019 RALLY SPAIN:

“Dear Ott, Martin, all our friends and supporters in Estonia, and President Kaljulaid, congratulations for the first World Rally Championship titles for Drivers and Co-Drivers by Estonians!

“Last year in Rally Finland, I saw so many Estonian fans waving Estonian flags to cheer on Ott and Martin.

“They said the flags were not a weight on their shoulders. Instead, they felt the strong support from all the fans to achieve their best.

“I’m glad that our Yaris WRC competed with such a strong wave of support from our Estonian friends and supporters, and we rode the wave to the championship title!

“Ott and Martin, I want to celebrate together with you guys on the podium for the World Rally Championship for Manufacturers in three weeks and thank all the strong Estonian support over the years!

“We must win in Australia!

“Let’s do it together!”

Akio Toyoda

Team Chairman, Toyota Gazoo Racing World Rally Team

FINAL CLASSIFICATION, RALLY DE ESPAÑA

1 Thierry Neuville/Nicolas Gilsoul (Hyundai i20 Coupe WRC) 3h07m39.6s

2 Ott Tänak/Martin Järveoja (Toyota Yaris WRC) +17.2s

3 Dani Sordo/Carlos del Barrio (Hyundai i20 Coupe WRC) +17.6s

4 Sébastien Loeb/Daniel Elena (Hyundai i20 Coupe WRC) +53.9s

5 Jari-Matti Latvala/Miikka Anttila (Toyota Yaris WRC) +1m00.2s

6 Elfyn Evans/Scott Martin (Ford Fiesta WRC) +1m14.2s

7 Teemu Suninen/Jarmo Lehtinen (Ford Fiesta WRC) +1m47.6s

8 Sébastien Ogier/Julien Ingrassia (Citroën C3 WRC) +4m20.5s

9 Mads Østberg/Torstein Eriksen (Citroën C3 R5) +8m24.6s

10 Eric Camilli/Benjamin Veillas (Citroën C3 R5) +8m47.2s

29 Kris Meeke/Seb Marshall (Toyota Yaris WRC) +42m20.0s

Toyota’s World Rally Champion Drivers:

1990: Carlos Sainz (Toyota Celica GT-Four ST165)

1992: Carlos Sainz (Toyota Celica Turbo 4WD ST185)

1993: Juha Kankkunen (Toyota Celica Turbo 4WD ST185)

1994: Didier Auriol (Toyota Celica Turbo 4WD ST185)

ENDS