



FEDERATION INTERNATIONALE DE L'AUTOMOBILE

## 2010 FIA WORLD RALLY CHAMPIONSHIP RALLY NEW ZEALAND

### End of day 'meet the crews' conference

7 May 2010

Present:

Petter Solberg Team – team manager Ken Rees

Citroen Total World Rally Team – Sven Smets

BP Ford Abu Dhabi World Rally Team – Malcolm Wilson

Welcome to the end of day 'meet the crews' conference for team-managers.

**Q:** Ken, let's start with you – it's been a fantastic day for Petter Solberg out there, some great stage times, but at the end-of-the-day though you do find yourselves in the lead and that means first on the road tomorrow. Big job for Petter tomorrow.

**KR:** It is. That is the way it happened to pan out this afternoon. It is not our choice but that is the position we are in and we'll just take the fight out there. It's just maximum attack – that is what we have to do now.

**Q:** You must be happy with the way things have gone today though, we have seen some strong times coming through from Petter.

**KR:** Yes, it has been an excellent day for him. But that's it.

**Q:** To Malcolm, Jari-Matti is in second position as we go in to what will be the second day tomorrow. It has been a tough day one out there, we have seen the cool Sébastien Loeb suffer with some problems, Jari-Matti seems to have a good day though.

**MW:** Yes, we've had a very good day. We've had no issues whatsoever and are really pleased with his place and Mikko is perfectly placed for tomorrow. So we will have to see what happens. It is all so close it is incredible you can have a 30 kilometre stage and the guys are separated by three-four seconds.

**Q:** How much are we going to see Mikko push tomorrow? He did say to us he was very much on the pace today but the times didn't seem to be coming through.

**MW:** We expected him to be a little bit quicker this afternoon in relation to Petter. But I think there are a couple of changes he wants to make to the car. With only remote service today what you leave with is what you've got to drive with for the rest of the day. So we will make a couple of changes and he is in a good road position for tomorrow.

**Q:** Sven, let's talk about Sébastien Loeb, a tough job for him sweeping the roads clear this morning, then on stage four disaster struck and we saw a mistake from Sébastien, what happened?

**SS:** He just came in a little bit too quick in a corner before the bridge and the bridge was a little bit too narrow for the car I would say. He was a little too quick, damaged the door and then he lost quite a lot of time trying to lock it again, then finally decided to continue like that and then finish the stage. Unfortunately he lost a little too much time with that but he is seven on the road tomorrow and had some very good stage times in the afternoon by actually being first on the road. So tomorrow in the first group of stages we hope he can take some time back and with all the guys up front being so close I'm 100% sure it is not the end of the rally for him.

**Q:** He did say to us at remote service with a 1min40 deficit, which is what it was earlier, he was unsure he would get on to the podium. But this is Sébastien Loeb at the end of the day – he's not a six-time World Rally Champion for nothing – do you think he can manage to get back to the podium by the end of the rally?

**SS:** He has two days and his mission is very, very easy, is to go flat-out from the first kilometre from the first stage. But he is seven on the road so we are confident he will pick up quite a bit of time in the first loop. Hopefully also on Sunday. Hopefully the weather stays dry. And then maybe a podium is still possible.

**Q:** Dani Sordo has had a good day today, but so has Sébastien Ogier of the Citroen Junior Team. He's never been to New Zealand before and he's looked very comfortable out there.

**SS:** Yes, we are very happy with both of them and their performances. They are third and fourth on the road tomorrow – excellent positions – not far behind Petter and Jari-Matti. So we have been very delighted with both of their performances.

**Q:** Ken, you lead at the end of day one – it's good motivation for the team to see Petter right at the top at the end of the first stage.

**KR:** Yes, it is fantastic. I haven't seen him as I have been here all day. So I said good-bye to him twelve hours ago and he's just coming back in now. But for the team it is great - the over-night leader. But okay, for the team we know we will suffer in the morning, but 60 kilometres and then it is back on clean roads. But yes, fabulous for the sponsors, fabulous for the team and Petter as well – we're loving it.

Present:

Petter Solberg  
Jari-Matti Latvala  
Sebastien Ogier

Welcome to the end of day 'meet the crews' conference with drivers

**Q:** Petter – you are in the lead at the end of day one – hand's up who wants it to rain tomorrow.

**PS:** That is me. But it doesn't matter. I enjoyed being second on the road today and I guess I got to see Sebastien's lines today and it has been very difficult to follow anyway. So hopefully it won't be a massive difference being first on the road tomorrow – I don't care, I will go flat-out anyway.

**Q:** Maximum attack for you tomorrow?

**PS:** I know it will be difficult to keep the lead, but as long as I don't lose too much and am quite close to everyone on Sunday morning it will be perfect.

**Q:** It has been so close out there already – how enjoyable has it been on these stages?

**PS:** It has been great. The stages are unbelievable – I can say a couple of stages today are the best stages in the world when you drive them and you just sit there enjoying going from corner to corner. It's really good fun – dancing yes.

**Q:** Jari-Matti, second position, just shy of Petter Solberg of course. Second on the road tomorrow – there is a little bit of tactical manoeuvring towards the end of the final stage by the drivers. Are you happy with second on the road?

**J-ML:** I am happy to start tomorrow to start second car on the road. Petter was driving really, really fast on the last stage so I couldn't match his speed. So at the end of the day being second car for tomorrow I will have at least some braking points so I can see where he has been braking. So that's a little bit of an idea how it's going to be tomorrow. But like Petter said, if you look at Sebastien Loeb's time it's incredible how quick he has been doing. So clearly in this rally you are not losing as much from the front as we expected.

**Q:** In terms of dramas today, we saw Sebastien Loeb with a drama on stage four. What about yourself, did you have any dramas out there at all?

**J-ML:** We had quite a clear day. We had one moment – that was in the second time through the long stage – when I got the splits that Sebastien Loeb was six ahead I just somehow wanted to go a bit quicker and was braking too late with a 90 right corner. I managed to get it turned but I was a long time in the ditch but luckily it came back.

**Q:** Sébastien, let's turn to you now. It's your first time in New Zealand and you made it look quite easy out there today. What's it like, have you enjoyed it?

**SO:** I really enjoyed the special stage. Maybe one of the beautiful rally of the championship. It was quite slippery but quite fantastic to drive today I am happy because I found a good rhythm in the second stage and then I pushed quite hard but then I finished a bit slower as I don't think it is the day to push – the rally will really start tomorrow morning.

**Q:** What is going to be the approach from you for tomorrow morning then?

**SO:** I think like everybody we have to push and drive as fast as possible and look what happened. I think my position on the road is not bad for tomorrow, for sure it is better for Dani and Mikko, but I would like to push.

**Q:** Finally back to you Petter; we've seen you do rain dances in the past and they've worked. Are you going to be doing any dancing tonight?

**PS:** Well, maybe a little on Sunday night. As I say, it doesn't matter. I will see how far we can go with the position for Sunday. Also the guys have to push very hard for tomorrow to get the advantage. So it will be a very interesting day tomorrow and I think we will have some fun. But we will have to watch Sebastien, I think it will be maximum attack and some incredible stage times from him tomorrow with his good starting position.