

## Guy Wilks claims excellent second place on Skoda debut

Sunday, 22 November 2009

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Wilks settled into the Fabia S2000 immediately, despite having less than one day of testing prior to the start of the event. Sporting its striking new Skoda UK livery, Wilks and the Fabia took a total of five stage wins during the course of the two days.

Wilks assumed second place overall from the very start of the event and the gap to eventual winner Kris Meeke was never more than a handful of seconds. The pair traded stage times throughout the rally and right up to the start of the final timed test, the second running of the infamous Loch Ard stage.

Wilks entered the final stage just 21 seconds behind Meeke with 33.52Km of treacherous gravel tracks to go. However, soon after the start of the stage, he came across the cars ahead of him parked-up, as an earlier car had gone off the road and blocked the stage. With no opportunity to remove the car, the stage was stopped and subsequently annulled, with all runners given the same notional time for the stage. Therefore, the event was over and Wilks clinched second place.

Commenting at the finish, Wilks said: "I'm delighted that we achieved our objective of finishing the rally and second place was a fantastic bonus. Of course, we would have preferred to complete the full distance but I'm glad that everyone was OK after the incident ahead of us.

"It's been a fantastic weekend but also, a very tricky one. The conditions on the stages with the almost constant rain have been very difficult. It has been slippery, there have been ruts which filled up with rain and on the first day, we had to drive around huge rocks that were dug out of the road by the cars ahead of us.

"But the Skoda Fabia S2000 has been excellent – fast, strong and reliable. We haven't had any car issues at all and the Rene Georges team did a great job of making sure it was in perfect condition all weekend.

"I hope that Skoda UK is as pleased with the result as we are. We brought the car home in one piece, which was our brief and managed to demonstrate just how fast and reliable it is at the same time. I have to say a huge thanks to Skoda UK for giving us this opportunity to take part in the event."

Speaking after the finish of the event, Director of Skoda UK Rob Hazelwood said: "I'm delighted that Guy finished this weekend's rally in second place. He was a natural choice of driver for us when we took the decision to support a car on the event and he fulfilled our objective of ensuring the car got to the finish in excellent style.

&ldquo;I think the fact that the Fabia S2000 completed the event with no problems and challenged the 2009 IRC champion in terms of outright speed shows what a well-developed and well-designed car it is. I&rsquo;d like to express my thanks to the organisers of the event for their efforts and to Rene Georges for running the car this weekend and doing such a professional job.&rdquo;