

## Wilks top Brit with points-scoring Monte Carlo finish

Saturday, 23 January 2010

On his first asphalt rally in a Fabia S2000, Skoda UK Motorsport driver Guy Wilks achieved the team's goal by finishing in a strong points-scoring 6th position on the Rallye Monte Carlo. Having celebrated his 29th birthday during the event, the Darlington-driver scored three points to make an encouraging start to his 2010 Intercontinental Rally Challenge.

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Co-driven by Phil Pugh, Guy drove intelligently and faultlessly throughout the four day, 251 stage mile event. Consistency proved the key to success, as he set 13 top ten fastest stage times out of 15 and didn't put a scratch on his Fabia S2000 – despite extremely challenging snow and ice covered mountain stages.

A stunning 2nd fastest time on the opening stage of Leg 3 (SS11) saw Guy move up two places to 5th. With just four stages north of Monaco remaining, it was going to be an exciting finale as just 49.9 seconds separated Guy (in a points-scoring position) and the 9th placed driver (outside the points).

Tyre choice would be critical, and whilst there was no snow on the twisty Alpes-Maritimes roads, freezing conditions meant sections of sheet ice, especially on the ascent to the Col de Turini, situated 1607 metres above Monaco.

Guy took winter tyres for the first loop of two stages, and whilst this was a good choice for the ice, he lost more time than he'd gained on the dry sections. Returning to the harbour in Monte Carlo, Guy was back in 7th, albeit just 1.9 seconds behind Jan Kopecký.

For the final loop, Guy took a combination of cut slick and intermediate tyres and maintained a fast and safe pace to complete a copybook performance and finish 6th, moving up one place after Sébastien Ogier retired.

Guy Wilks: 'It's been a fantastic rally – very difficult, but fantastic. Skoda UK Motorsport is such a new team, and this is the first time I've rallied a Fabia S2000 on Tarmac. The car hasn't missed a beat and if you consider that Rallye Monte Carlo is one of the most difficult events in the world, a points-scoring finish is a fantastic result. We've stuck to our plan of taking no risks and getting mileage in the car, and it has paid dividends.

'This is a very encouraging start to the IRC, and we're looking forward to going to Brazil and Argentina for the next two gravel events.'

Skoda UK Motorsport's next event will be Round 2 of the Intercontinental Rally Challenge, the Rally International de Curitiba, in Brazil (4-6 March).

### Leg 3 results (after SS15)

1. Mikko Hirvonen/Jarmo Lehtinen (Ford Fiesta S2000) 4hr 32min 58.5secs
2. Juho Hänninen/Mikko Markkula (Skoda Fabia S2000) +1min 51.4secs
3. Nicolas Vouilloz/Benjamin Veillas (Skoda Fabia S2000) 3min 19.1secs
4. Stéphane Sarrazin/Jacques-Julien Renucci (Peugeot 207 S2000) 7mins 25.5secs

5. Jan Kopecký/Petr Stary (&Scaron;koda Fabia S2000)&hellip;8mins 48.7secs

6. Guy Wilks/Phil Pugh (&Scaron;koda Fabia S2000)&hellip;9mins 24.5secs

IRC points (Drivers&rsquo;) after Round 1

1. Mikko Hirvonen&hellip;10pts

2. Juho Hänninen&hellip;8pts

3. Nicolas Vouilloz&hellip;6pts

4. Stéphane Sarrazin&hellip;5pts

5. Jan Kopecký&hellip;4pts

6. Guy Wilks&hellip;3pts

IRC points (Manufacturers&rsquo;) after Round 1

1. &Scaron;koda&hellip;14pts

2. M-Sport&hellip;10pts

3. Peugeot&hellip;9pts

4. Subaru&hellip;5pts

5. Mitsubishi&hellip;1pt