

## Hirvonen stretches Rally Sweden lead

Saturday, 13 February 2010

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Today's route took in another two loops of four stages covering 117.76 competitive kilometres. Early morning temperatures plunged to -22°C but, as the sun rose, blue skies and sunshine made for a stunning Scandinavian winter's day.

Hirvonen made his intentions clear from the outset, the Ford driver winning the first stage to consolidate his overnight advantage. However, Loeb fought back to take victory on the following three stages, closing the gap to 4.2 seconds when Hirvonen also stalled on the start line of SS12.

The repeated stages in the afternoon saw Latvala and Marcus Grönholm dominate, but an inspired decision to swap tyres before the final three rutted stages of the day gave Hirvonen a greater advantage over Loeb, who changed the tyres in preparation for the last two stages only. As a consequence, the Finn extended his lead to 23 seconds, before losing a handful of seconds to his rival in the last 1.87 kilometre stage, his earlier all-out attack resulting in a lack of studs in the tyres.

Citroen suffered another set-back when Dani Sordo had to stop in SS15 to remove a snow shield from the engine compartment. It cost the Spaniard a minute, dropping him behind Latvala and into a distant fourth position. Sébastien Ogier adopted the same tyre strategy as Loeb and suffered oversteer, but the Frenchman has maintained fifth position. Henning Solberg holds sixth with Matthew Wilson climbing one place to seventh.

Former World Rally Champion Petter Solberg has climbed from 13th to ninth. After their problems yesterday, Marcus Grönholm and Kimi Räikkönen continue to push, although Grönholm had a puncture and went off the road, and the former F1 World Champion - who is on an immense learning curve - lost another minute when he too went off. They are 29th and 35th respectively.

### Rally Sweden &ndash; Results after Day 2

1. Mikko Hirvonen/Jarmo Lehtinen  
Ford Focus RS WRC  
2 hr 14 min 48.3sec
2. Sébastien Loeb/Daniel Elena  
Citroën C4 WRC  
2 hr 15 min 04.9sec
3. Jari-Matti Latvala/Miikka Anttila  
Ford Focus RS WRC  
2 hr 15 min 39.7sec

4. Dani Sordo/Marc Marti  
Citroën C4 WRC  
2 hr 16 min 34.5sec

5. Sébastien Ogier/Julien Ingrassia  
Citroën C4 WRC  
2 hr 17 min 30.4sec

6. Henning Solberg/Ilka Minor  
Ford Focus RS WRC  
2 hr 19 min 06.2sec

7. Matthew Wilson/Scott Martin  
Ford Focus RS WRC  
2 hr 20 min 32.4sec

8. Mads Östberg/Jonas Andersson  
Subaru Impreza WRC  
2 hr 20 min 45.6sec

9. Petter Solberg/Phil Mills  
Citroën C4 WRC  
2 hr 23 min 23.5sec

10. P-G Andersson/Anders Fredriksson  
&Scaron;koda Super 2000  
2 hr 23 min 46.4sec