

Fantastic One-Two for Ford Fiesta S2000 in Mexico

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The event based in the central Mexican town of León provided top class action throughout the weekend, as three on-form Ford Fiesta S2000 crews left the rest of the field trailing and fought out a close contest for SWRC honours.

24-year-old Pole Michal Kosciuszko was off the mark quickly on day one, opening up a gap of over 30seconds after the first loop of stages.

However, his charge was halted after his alternator belt snapped and he was forced to retire. That allowed Spanish driver Xevi Pons to assume the lead, and he managed to hold off fellow Ford Fiesta S2000 runner Martin Prokop over the rest of the day's tests to return to service with an advantage of around eight seconds over the consistent Czech.

Prokop was pleased to still be in such close contention having suffered a fuel leak and some heavy damage from rocks earlier in the day.

On Saturday Pons began to stretch his lead over the first stage, SS10 Ibarrilla, but was then hit by a clutch problem that saw him drop more than 40seconds and he fell back into second place on the SWRC leaderboard.

Prokop took advantage of Pons's misfortune and drove steadily throughout the day to finish the second leg with a narrow lead of 4.8seconds.

Meanwhile, Michal Kosciuszko had enjoyed another bittersweet day of rallying.

Having returned under SuperRally rules he showed fantastic pace in the Ford Fiesta S2000 to win four SWRC stages, before being hit by another mechanical problem that stopped him in his tracks once again, this time a broken propshaft.

With only four stages to complete on Sunday Prokop and Pons were set for a showdown on the dusty Mexican plains to decide who took the win.

With his clutch issues resolved after overnight service Pons surged back into the lead after winning SS19 Guanajuatito, with Prokop only third-fastest.

After that Prokop decided to take the points on offer for second to strengthen his championship bid rather than go flat out for the win and risk a non-finish, although he did sign off with a stage win on the final test, the SS22 Super Special.

That meant Pons could drive steadily and secure victory on his first SWRC event and first rally in the Ford Fiesta S2000 by a margin of 17.6seconds.

The pace of the Ford Fiesta S2000 crews was once again highlighted by the fact that both Pons and Prokop finished eighth and ninth overall on the rally, ahead of some WRC competitors.

Other Ford Fiesta S2000 news

Regular BP Ford Abu Dhabi WRC driver Khalid al Qassimi clinched a comfortable victory in the 2010 Kuwait International Rally on Saturday in a Ford Fiesta S2000. Al-Qassimi gradually extended his 7.7s overnight lead in round two of the FIA Middle East Rally Championship to record his seventh regional championship rally victory by the margin of 49 seconds. The win moved him into a joint lead with Qatar's Nasser Saleh Al-Attiyah and Sheikh Hamed Bin Eid Al-Thani in the 2010 FIA Middle East Rally Championship.

Portugese crew Bernardo Sousa and co-driver Nuno Silva also stormed to a win at the Torrié Rally in the Ford Fiesta S2000 on Saturday. It was the opening round of the 2010 Portugese championship and the debut for the car at national level in Portugal, but Sousa outpaced many more powerful cars to lead by over 50seconds at one stage. However, his lead was cut significantly due to power steering issues late in the rally and his winning margin was eventually just 6.6seconds. Sousa's next international rally in the Ford Fiesta S2000 will be Rally Jordan in April.

Xevi Pons said:

"It's an incredible start to the season for us. We had a few problems on Saturday that made it difficult but today [Sunday] the car was perfect and we knew we could go for the win. It's a great car and we felt more and more comfortable after every stage as we learned more about it. We are so happy with the way things went here and of course we want to continue like this for the rest of the year."

Martin Prokop said:

"It was a very hard rally. We took a lot of damage on Friday so we had to drive to save the car and make it to the finish. Here we decided to take points for the championship rather than fight Xevi for the win so we are happy with the result. It puts us in a strong position and we are looking forward to the next round as we can afford to fight for the win then."

Michal Kosciusko said:

"We had a lot of problems during the rally but the main thing is that we showed how quick we can be. We won most of the SWRC stages and that gives us a lot of confidence for the rest of the season. The car felt so good when there was no problem, and I really think it is a lot faster than the Fabia. We know now what we can achieve if we have a little more luck."

M-Sport Managing Director Malcolm Wilson said:

"It's been another outstanding weekend for the Ford Fiesta S2000. Pons and Prokop securing first and second at Rally Mexico was impressive, particularly as it was Pons' first event in the car. However, Michal Kosciusko deserved to be up there with them as he drove exceptionally well throughout the event only to be thwarted by a couple of frustrating problems. With Khalid Al Qassimi winning in Qatar and Bernardo Sousa also driving the Fiesta to a win in Portugal, it really has been another superb set of results for what is still a very new car."

