



FERM GRABS POINTS AT DEBUT!

THE MERCURY SOMETIMES DIPPED TO -27 DEGREES AND THERE WAS AN UNEXPECTED AMOUNT OF SNOW. EVEN UNDER THOSE CONDITIONS, DENNIS KUIPERS AND THE FERM WORLD RALLY TEAM STILL MANAGED TO RETURN FROM SWEDEN WITH FOUR WORLD CHAMPIONSHIP POINTS IN THEIR POCKETS.



In one of the coldest Rallies of Sweden in recent memory, Dennis Kuipers and navigator Frederic Miclotte finished with a respectable thirteenth place overall. And that in spite of the fact that no more than 75 km of test runs were driven with the new Ford Fiesta RS WRC.

The team also finished as eighth in the manufacturers' championship, good for four World Championship points. The net result was that the FERM World Rally Team was the first Dutch team ever to garner World Championship

points in its debut rally.

Rally Sweden has been the home field rally for snow specialists for decades. That was more true than ever during the 2011 running. Fresh snow before and on opening day provided unpredictable conditions during the classification runs for three days.

Dennis Kuipers adjusted his strategy to the new conditions. The driver from the FERM Power Tools World Rally Team chose to use the event to get experience with the new Ford Fiesta RS WRC. "This is only my

second Rally Sweden," he says. "Being Dutch, it's virtually impossible to match the experience of driving on snow and ice that the Scandinavians have."

After losing some time on opening day due to a problem with the turbo pressure, Dennis Kuipers moved from seventeenth to thirteenth place in the overall rankings on the second day. On Sunday, Kuipers and Miclotte consolidated that position, ensuring themselves of their first World Championship points.

"I'm quite pleased with

how this rally went," Kuipers said at the finish in Karlstad. "It's great that we earned some points for the manufacturers' championship. I also got some very valuable experience with the new car. Basically, all I can say is: mission accomplished. I'm looking forward to the next WRC rally next month in Mexico."

Rally Sweden was clearly in the sights of fellow Ford driver Mikko Hirvonen. The Finnish Ford driver proved to be the strongest of five drivers who started on the final day with a margin between them of no more than 15 seconds.

RALLY SWEDEN

FOR SPECIALISTS

Rally Sweden is a classic in the World Rally Championship. Its history goes back to 1950...61 years of history for this specialist-dominated competition.



Photos: M-Sport

The surface makes the difference in Sweden. Central Sweden in February is synonymous with roads covered in snow and ice. The roads are also hilly, with many blind turns, as well as being filled with straightaways, which makes it possible to achieve high speeds.

To succeed in a World Championship Rally, highly developed senses,

exceptional road control and a lot of guts are required. In Sweden, you need something else, too: driving on ice and snow has to be second nature. To win this race, you really have to be born Scandinavian.

ONE EXCEPTION

The honour roll of winners has only a single exception: the Frenchman Sebastien Loeb. In 2004, the now seven-time world

champion managed to out-drive his Nordic competitors. All of the other editions of Rally Sweden have repeatedly been the preserve of Swedes, Norwegians and Finns.

The Swede Stig Blomqvist is the absolute record holder with seven victories (1971, 1972, 1973, 1977, 1979, 1982, 1984), the Finn Marcus Gronhom was best five

times (2000, 2002, 2003, 2006, 2007), while his countryman Tommi Makinen dominated in 1996, 1998 and 1999.

A FINN AGAIN

A Finn proved to be the fastest again this year. Mikko Hirvonen, the Ford factory driver, gave the new Ford Fiesta RS WRC the best conceivable debut: victory.

FERM RALLY FACT

Just like in every World Championship rally, the mechanics of the FERM World Rally Team also changed a lot of tyres in Sweden. The FERM power wrenches were not busy mounting fresh no-profile tyres or rough studded gravel tyres.

In Sweden, the WRC teams were using spiked tyres. No other tyre can make it possible for a World Rally Car to manoeuvre on the snow and ice-covered roads in spite of four-wheel drives and 300 hp.

The spiked tyres do their name proud. More than 1600 spikes – 7 mm high – provide the necessary grip for each wheel. Quick calculations show that Dennis Kuipers was supported by more than 1,500 steel spikes, which gripped the snow and ice on the road like tiny claws during his adventures over the 22 typical Scandinavian special stages.

SUPPORT FROM 1600 SPIKES



FERM WORLD RALLY TEAM SWEDEN 2011



EDITORIAL:

• WEB: FERMWRT.COM • TWITTER: TWITTER.COM/OFFICIALFERM • EDITORS: BART-JAN KEIZER, ROEL SCHOONDERMARK • TEXT: ADREM COMMUNICATIE •
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