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Press Release

Neuville still leads the Rally Italia Sardegna duel with Latvala

Alghero (SS), June 10, 2016. Thierry Neuville and co-driver Nicolas Gilsoul ends in the lead the second day of Rally Italia Sardegna after a wonderful fight against Jari-Matti Latvala, co-driven by Miikka Anttila. On their Hyundai i20 New Generation WRC the Belgian crew was fastest in the last three special stages (SS7, SS8 and SS9) of Friday's competition of the sixth round of the World Rally Championship, regaining first position overall as already happened in the morning, when they had won SS4 and SS5. At the end of the day Neuville holds by only 11.1s the Volkswagen Polo R WRC Finn crew, who, on their side, had led the event after winning SS2 and SS6. As the fight will go on tomorrow, a very close group follows. After an early lead, French World Champion Sebastien Ogier, who on his Polo R WRC won yesterday's SS1 and today's SS3, ended the first leg of the rally on third place while another Volkswagen driver, Norwegian Andreas Mikkelsen, is fourth, just ahead of his fellow driver Mads Ostberg, who has kept a good rhythm for the whole day on the M-Sport Ford Fiesta RS WRC and was overtaken by Mikkelsen only after today's last test. Last year runner-up Hayden Paddon had to retire after he went off with his Hyundai i20 New Generation WRC at the very last corner of SS7, the same stage where Teemu Suninen lost the WRC 2 lead in favor of Umberto Scandola after a rock caused a puncture to his Skoda Fabia R5. On his side, Skoda Motorsport Italia driver is at ease among the WRC protagonists and holds by only 3.3s Esapekka Lappi, on the first Skoda Motorsport car. In WRC 3 ACI Team Italia driver Fabio Andolfi leads on his Peugeot 208 R2.

Saturday, June 11 will be the longest day of the 2016 World Rally Championship so far featuring six tests for a total competitive distance of 177.70 km. This leg of 2016 Rally Italia Sardegna will be entirely located in the Monte Acuto region. It will start from the Monti di Alà special stage (km 22.20), followed by Coiluna-Loelle (km 22.39) and by the classic Monte Lerno test, that, once again, will be the longest one with its 44.26 km. A second loop on the same stages will follow the mid-day service park in Alghero before ending the day at 20:40hrs. Final leg of the rally will take place on Sunday, June 12. It will feature 40.26 competitive kilometers, split in four stages: two passages through Cala Flumini (km 14.06) and two through the new stage of Sassari-Argentiera (km 6.07) which is also the new final Power Stage with worldwide live coverage. Podium Ceremony will end the event at 13:45hrs in the harbour area of Alghero.

Top-5 standings: 1. Neuville-Gilsoul (Hyundai i20 New Generation WRC) 1h14m03.2s; 2. Latvala-Anttila (Volkswagen Polo R WRC) +11.1s; 3. Ogier-Ingrassia (Volkswagen Polo R WRC) +40.3s; 4. Mikkelsen-Yaeger (Volkswagen Polo R WRC) +57.5s; 5. Ostberg-Floene (Ford Fiesta RS WRC) +58.5s.

WRC 2016 Calendar: jan 21-24 Rallye Monte-Carlo - snow/asphalt; feb 11-14 - Rally Sweden - snow; mar 3-6 Rally México - gravel; apr 21-24 Rally Argentina - gravel; may 19-22 Rally de Portugal - gravel; **june 9-12 - 13° Rally Italia Sardegna - gravel**; june 30-july 3 Rally Poland - gravel; july 28-31 Rally Finland - gravel; aug 18-21 Rallye Deutschland - asphalt; sept. 8-11 Rally China - asphalt; sept-29-oct.2 Tour de Corse - asphalt; oct. 13-16 Rally RACC Catalunya - asphalt/gravel; oct. 27-30 Wales Rally GB - gravel; nov. 17-20 Rally Australia - gravel.