

Rally Italia Sardegna: Preview

TOYOTA GAZOO Racing targets Sardinia success

Rally Italia Sardegna represents the halfway point of the 2018 FIA World Rally Championship season, as round seven out of 13. The TOYOTA GAZOO Racing World Rally Team will again be aiming for a top result on the Italian island event with its Yaris WRCs driven by Jari-Matti Latvala, Ott Tänak and Esapekka Lappi.



Yaris WRC Car 8

Rally Italia Sardegna is characterised by fast but narrow gravel roads, which are lined by trees and rocks, leaving very little margin for error. The fine sandy surface is gradually swept away by each passing car, exposing the harder, rocky base underneath. High temperatures can stress the crews and their cars.

The event will begin on Thursday evening with a super special stage at Ittiri near the rally base in Alghero. Friday consists of four stages to the north-east which will all be run twice, while on Saturday there will be two loops of three stages in the Monte Acuto region, separated by another visit to Ittiri. The rally concludes on Sunday with two repeated stages north of Alghero.

Quotes:

Tommi Mäkinen (Team Principal)

"I am feeling confident about we can achieve in Sardinia. We had a very good test there before Rally Argentina, which was of course a great event for us. I believe that we should have a strong package for these kind of roads. Generally, the performance has been very positive over the past few rallies, and everybody in the team is working hard to keep improving. We already had some good results in

Sardinia last year, and Ott won the rally, so I think it is an event where all of our drivers feel comfortable. Overall, there are many reasons to be positive.”



Jari-Matti Latvala and Miikka Anttila

Jari-Matti Latvala (Driver car 7)

“I always enjoy competing in Sardinia. I actually drove there for the first time in 2003 on the Rally Costa Smeralda, the year before the WRC started going there. The roads have a very hard base with a layer of sand on the top which can make it very slippery for the first cars on the road. The roads are narrow but you can go very fast if you can keep to the right line. I feel positive heading to Sardinia. I had two clean days of driving in Portugal without any mistakes and this helped my confidence a lot, and I am really enjoying driving this car.”

Ott Tänak (Driver car 8)

“Sardinia is a special rally for me as it’s where I got my first win one year ago. Hopefully we can get another top result this time around. I think this will be a key rally for the championship. Portugal obviously didn’t go as well as we planned or hoped, so it will be really important to score some strong points. We are trying to be well prepared as possible, and I know that the team is working really hard. I am really happy with how the car has been performing: In Argentina it was fantastic and it felt good in Portugal as well. Now we just need to translate that speed into a good result before the summer holidays.”



Ott Tänak and Martin Järveoja

Esapekka Lappi (Driver car 9)

“I am really looking forward to competing in Sardinia again. We had a pretty good result there already last year and my speed was good, as we won six stages. I think I have learnt a lot since then, and there has also been a lot of progress with the car. I have felt very comfortable over the last couple of rallies and I have had the confidence to push hard. Now that we are fifth in the championship, we will have to run quite early on the road on Friday. The road cleaning effect can be quite big there, but I got some good experience of this on the final two days in Portugal, so I am not worrying about this too much.”



Esapekka Lappi and Janne Ferm

The statistics (Rally Italia Sardegna):

Year	Jari-Matti Latvala	Ott Tänak	Esapekka Lappi
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2017	2	1	4
2016	2	5	21
2015	6	14	17
2014	3	21	-
2013	3	-	-
2012	12	3	-

What happened last year?

Toyota enjoyed a strong first visit to Rally Italia Sardegna. Jari-Matti Latvala finished in second place (close behind his future team-mate Ott Tänak, who won the rally) while Esapekka Lappi was fourth in only his second event at the highest level of the WRC, posting six fastest times including on the Power Stage. Juho Hänninen also won a stage on his way to sixth overall.



Rally Italia Sardegna 2017

Press release

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URL: <https://www.tgr-dam.com>

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