



Magalhaes to hit back in the Azores

Bruno Magalhaes has vowed to hit back from the disappointment of retiring from the GEKO Ypres Rally last week by winning his home event, Sata Rallye Acores next month.

The Peugeot Sport Portugal ace was fourth overall after the opening stage in Belgium only for engine failure to force his retirement on the very next stage. The Lisbon-based Portuguese driver's retirement means he slips to 10th position in the Intercontinental Rally Challenge drivers' standings after five rounds.

Magalhaes claimed a dramatic final-stage win on Sata Rallye Acores last season aboard his 207 Super 2000. He hopes to banish the memories of Ypres by emulating his victory of one year ago when the IRC resumes on the Atlantic archipelago from 14-16 July.

"For sure we will be strong in the Azores and I really want to do a good result after Ypres," said the 30-year-old. "I know it will be difficult to win again because the pace in the IRC is fantastic and many drivers have good experience of the roads there now. But I have good confidence, I am very motivated, I won there last year and I know I can win again."

Loix rewarded with Czech rally outing

Freddy Loix has received the ultimate reward for winning the GEKO Ypres Rally: another outing in his SKODA Fabia Super 2000.

Less than a week after winning the Intercontinental Rally Challenge round on his home soil, Belgian Loix will be heading to Czech Republic to contest the national championship Rally Bohemia with the factory SKODA Motorsport team.

The current IRC leader has been called up to replace Jan Kopecky who has been prevented from taking part after his co-driver Petr Stary broke his collarbone in a crash during the pre-event shakedown for the Ypres Rally. It will be Loix's first appearance on the Mlada Boleslav-based rally, which runs from 1-3 July.

"I have heard that the profile of Rally Bohemia is similar to that of the Barum Rally and that it is a great but difficult rally," said the 40-year-old Loix, who will be co-driven by regular navigator Frederic Miclotte. "I am sorry for Jan and Petr, we could have made a strong team together. Anyway, we are going to do our best, and although my unfamiliarity with the [stages] will be bit of a disadvantage for me, Frederic and I want to fight for the top ranks."

SKODA is based in Mlada Boleslav and is also a partner of the event. The company's motorsport head Michal Hrabanek said: "I am sure that the appearance by the current IRC leader Freddy Loix will make this rally highly attractive and will be a good reason for fans to come to this event."

Rally Bohemia features 15 all-asphalt stages over a competitive distance of 193 kilometres.

Weijs needs funds for more IRC runs

Hans Weijs hopes that his run to third overall on the GEKO Ypres Rally last week won't signal his last appearance in the Intercontinental Rally Challenge this season.



The 24-year-old from Netherlands had only completed a brief test in his SKODA Fabia Super 2000 before the start of the asphalt event but drove virtually without error to claim the final podium place and secure the prestigious Colin McRae IRC Flat Out Trophy in the process.

“Of course I want to do more events in the IRC and build on this result but for now we have no sponsors and I can only do more events if I find extra budget,” said Weijs. “I’ve shown my speed here and shown what I can do so maybe sponsors will take an interest in me.”

Eurosport Events completes Scotland visit

Preparations for RACMSA Rally of Scotland, which will form the penultimate round of the Intercontinental Rally Challenge from 7-9 October, stepped up a gear earlier this month when a delegation from Eurosport Events, the IRC’s promoter, visited part of the competitive route.

The six-strong team was finalising camera locations and helicopter positions on the Errochty and the new-for-2011 High Corrie stages that will be included on the all-gravel event later this season.

Xavier Gavory, the IRC’s General Co-ordinator, said: “Scotland has an incredible landscape with the most challenging roads for the competitors. This gives us great images for the television and exciting competition.”

Jean-Pierre Nicolas, the IRC Motorsport Development Manager, added: “This is one of the most beautiful rallies in the IRC. Errochty is the best stage: fast, quite wide, it flows and the surface is just perfect. High Corrie is a slower stage, it is very tricky and technical and because of this there is lots of possibilities to make mistakes.”

Details of the RACMSA Rally of Scotland television package will be announced in due course.

Sata Rallye Acores media accreditation and information

Journalists planning to attend Sata Rallye Acores not in possession of an IRC Permanent Press Credential have until 11 July to submit their applications. A form is available to download from the media section of www.satarallyacores.com or by emailing the event press officer, Rui Ferreira at promoverde@gmail.com.

All television and radio outlets should apply to Antonios Argyropoulos by emailing antonios@eurosport.com.

Holders of IRC Permanent Press Credentials planning to attend the event are asked to email media@ircseries.com as soon as possible to confirm their attendance.

IRC media enquiries and information

Media requiring information on the IRC should contact Richard Rodgers on media@ircseries.com, +44 7833 470541, or visit www.rally-irc.com for all the latest news, high-resolution images and the free IRC iPhone and iPad Application.