



## Sunday wrap: Loebstrikes back in Germany

Sebastien Loeb marked the 10th anniversary of ADAC Rallye Deutschland's elevation to the FIA World Rally Championship by winning the asphalt event for a ninth time in the Citroen DS3 WRC he shares with co-driver Daniel Elena.

Loeb won the opening stage on Friday morning to take a lead he would never relinquish following a dominant display in changeable weather conditions. The result was his seventh victory of 2012 - his fifth in succession - and hands him a 54-point title lead heading to Wales Rally GB next month.

"It was a hard rally, the conditions were extremely difficult, which meant I had some very difficult tyre choices to make," said the 38-year-old, who claimed a total of nine stage wins during the course of the three-day event in Trier, including the Sunday's first rain-hit test, Dhrontal, and the Circus Maximus Power Stage in Trier. "We had a good drive, a perfect car and I made no mistake. Winning the Power Stage also meant this was a perfect weekend. I also had a lot of support from the fans."

Loeb's only cause for concern occurred on the repeat of Dhrontal when he reported a slight lack of turbo response, which led to him mistakenly fearing that he would be unable to fight for the three bonus points awarded to the Power Stage winner.

Jari-Matti Latvala was the leading Ford finisher in second - his best result on asphalt in the WRC - with Mikko Hirvonen making it two Citroen runners on the podium in third despite not showing the kind of speed that has carried him to 14 WRC victories in the past. Latvala's only cause for concern on day three occurred when the bonnet of his Fiesta RS WRC began to lift on stage 13, while Hirvonen spent the day conducting set-up work.

Mads Ostberg finished fourth for the Adapta World Rally Team with Chris Atkinson a strong fifth in his debut for WRC Team MINI Portugal. Sebastien Ogier shone for Volkswagen Motorsport, guiding the German firm's Super 2000-specification Skoda Fabia to sixth overall with team-mate Andreas Mikkelsen next up. The undoubted highlight for Norwegian Mikkelsen was his capture of the third fastest time on the Power Stage.

Ott Tanak restarted under Rally 2 rules following his exit on Saturday's closing test and finished ninth on the road behind London 2012 Olympics bronze medallist Nasser Al-Attiyah, who was fourth fastest on the Power Stage on his WRC comeback with the Qatar World Rally Team. However, the Estonian was withdrawn from the event to enable the fitting of key linked components for the next asphalt event in France.

That decision by the M-Sport Ford squad meant Dani Sordo took ninth on his return under Rally 2 rules in Prodrive's MINI John Cooper Works WRC, the Spaniard moving ahead of French Peugeot 207 driver Mathieu Arzeno in the closing stages.

Petter Solberg followed Arzeno home in 11th, the ex-world champion restarting following repairs to his factory Fiesta when he crashed on day two. Solberg left first service in Trier this morning having set up his car with the aim of challenging for Power Stage glory only for a few mistakes on the slippery surface to hold him back.



Thierry Neuville lost a few seconds with a brief loss of traction exiting a hairpin on stage 13 before he stopped to change a puncture two kilometres into the following test. Russian Evgeny Novikov retired with a broken rear differential after stage 13.

Sepp Wiegand's outside hopes of a top 10 finish were dashed when the young German talent spent several minutes repairing a damaged wishbone on Sunday's first stage.