



## 52<sup>th</sup> Rallye de France- Tour de Corse (October 10-12, 2008)

### Sébastien Loeb, Daniel Elena and Citroën triumph in Corsica

Sébastien Loeb, Daniel Elena and their Citroën C4 led from start to finish to win the 52<sup>nd</sup> Rallye de France-Tour de Corse, round 13 of the 2008 World Rally Championship. Citroën's Managing Director Gilles Michel was in Ajaccio to celebrate the four-time World Champions' tenth win of the season which sees them take a step closer to a possible fifth consecutive world title.

Today's programme consisted of two attempts at 'Agosta/Pont de Calzola' (31.81km) and 'Pierra Rossa/Verghia' (26.32km), two classic Tour de Corse stages but this year run in the opposite direction to their usual format. In total, Sunday's menu featured 116.26km of competitive action which had the potential to spring a few surprises.

The Citroën C4 WRC crew began the morning with a cushion of more than 50 seconds over their closest chasers and profited from the outstanding competitiveness of their car on the day's first test (SS13) which started with a steep climb up to the Col de Bellevalle, followed by a hairpin bend and the long, fast descent to Pila-Canale. After a short road section, they moved on to SS14 which featured a wide, good surfaced road up to the Col de Gradello, after which a celebrated sequence of three hairpins marked the beginning of the narrow, bumpy and very fast run back down towards Coti-Chiavari near the coast. The Citroën pair profited from the first loop to secure two further fastest times which enabled them to pull even further clear at the top of the leaderboard.



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"The first two stages went well," reported Sébastien at the mid-morning break in the sunshine on the harbour side in Ajaccio. "The main thing was to stay concentrated, so I preferred to push quite hard, but without taking any risks. We were first on the road, so the conditions were clean, and that meant we had less chance of coming across a rock in the middle of the stage. Contesting these two classics in the opposite direction wasn't a problem. However, I must admit that when I heard that our closest rival for the 2008 Drivers' title was in trouble on SS13, the thought that we could perhaps wrap up the championship here in Corsica did pass my mind... but in the end he was able to continue."

The second visit to the same two stages passed off without a hitch for Sébastien and Daniel who went on to secure their fourth consecutive Tour de Corse win, a first in the history of the event. They are now closing hard on the outright records of Didier Auriol and Bernard Darniche who have both won this event six times. Meanwhile, the reigning World Champions' 10<sup>th</sup> win of the year takes them level with their own record for the highest number of wins in a single season, a benchmark they established in 2005, and which they can still perhaps better this time round. Last but not least, today's win is the 46<sup>th</sup> world class victory of their career.

"It would obviously have been more enjoyable if we had had a fight on our hands," observed Seb, "but there's nothing I can do about that. It's not me you need to ask what our opponents will have to do to beat us on this event! Winning your home event is always something special. Our tactic this weekend was to pull gradually clear to begin with, then hopefully control from in front. We were helped by our C4 which was both competitive and reliable, while the set-up we chose for this rally enabled us to benefit from the full potential of our Pirelli tyres. We are unbeaten this year on asphalt and we have pulled further clear at the top of the championship standings. The weekend could have been worse..."

The smile on the face Olivier Quesnel as he welcomed Sébastien and Daniel back to Citroën Total's facilities in the service park – which had been invaded by journalists – said it all: "Victories rarely get more emphatic than this," he beamed. "Our cars have always gone well in Corsica and, this year again, we were able to dominate from start to finish thanks to the excellent work of everyone in the team. There was little suspense, but it was still a very stressful three days because anything can always happen! But Seb and Daniel put in a perfect run, scoring 15 fifteen fastest stage times from 16! What a performance! Today's result takes them further clear at the top of the Drivers' standings and Citroën hasn't dropped many points in the Manufacturers' championship. There are two other performances I would like to applaud, that of Urmo Aava/Kuldar Sikk who finished seventh with their CSP Technologies Citroën C4, and that of Sébastien Ogier and Julien Ingrassia who succeeded in clinching the 2008 Junior World Championship\* today in their Citroën C2 Super 1600."



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## Rally facts

### Positions of the C4 WRC stage by stage.

	Sébastien Loeb Daniel Elena
SS13: Agosta-Pont de Calzola 1 (31.81 km)	<b>1<sup>st</sup></b>
SS14: Pietra Rossa-Verghia 1 (26.32 km)	<b>1<sup>st</sup></b>
SS15: Agosta-Pont de Calzola 2 (31.81 km)	<b>1<sup>st</sup></b>
SS16: Pietra Rossa-Verghia 2 (26.32 km)	2 <sup>nd</sup> + 4.9s

### Stage wins

**Day 1: SS1, SS2, SS3, SS4, SS5, SS6: Sébastien Loeb (Citröen C4).**

**Day 2: SS7, SS8, SS9, SS10, SS11: S. Loeb** – SS12: François Duval (Ford Focus).

**Day 3: SS13, SS14: S. Loeb** – **SS15: S. Loeb** and Jari-Matti Latvala (Ford Focus) – SS16: Mikko Hirvonen (Ford Focus).

**Best performers: S. Loeb: 13 stage wins** – F. Duval, 1 - JM. Latvala, 1 and M. Hirvonen, 1.

**Leaders: SS1 to SS16: S. Loeb.**

### Final leaderboard on 52<sup>th</sup> Rally de France - Tour de Corse (13/15)\*

<b>1. S. Loeb/D. Elena (Citröen C4)</b>	<b>3 h 42 min 58 s</b>
2. M. Hirvonen/J. Lehtinen (Ford Focus)	+ 3 min 24,7 s
3. F. Duval/P. Pivato (Ford Focus)	+ 3 min 31, 6 s
4. JM. Latvala/M. Anttila (Ford Focus)	+ 3 min 37,5 s
5. P. Solberg/P. Mills (Subaru Impreza)	+ 5 min 35,4 s
6. C. Atkinson/S. Prevot (Subaru Impreza)	+ 6 min 10,4 s
<b>7. U. Aava/K. Sikk (Citröen C4)</b>	<b>+ 7 min 25,2 s</b>
8. M. Wilson/S. Martin (Ford Focus)	+ 9 min 02,2 s
9. M. Østberg/OK. Unnerud (Subaru Impreza)	+ 9 min 13,3 s
10. B. Clark/P. Nagle (Ford Focus)	+ 13 min 38,3 s

### FIA World rally Championship's rankings 'Manufacturers' (round 12/15)\*

**1. Citröen-Total, 169 points** – 2. Ford, 146 points – 3. Subaru, 87 pts – 4. Stobart, 60 pts – 5. Munchi's, 22 pts – 6. Suzuki, 21 pts.

### FIA World rally Championship's rankings 'Drivers' (round 12/15)\*

**1. S. Loeb, 106 points** – 2. M. Hirvonen, 92 pts – **3. D. Sordo, 59 pts** – 4. C. Atkinson, 45 pts – 5. JM. Latvala, 42 pts – 6. P. Solberg, 40 pts – 7. H. Solberg, 22 pts – 8. F. Duval, 22 – 9. G. Galli, 17 pts – 10. M. Wilson, 13 pts – **11. U. Aava, 13 pts** – 12. F. Villagra, 9 pts – **13. C. Rautenbach, 6 pts** – 14. T. Gardemeister, 5 pts – 15. A. Mikkelsen, 5 pts – 16. PG. Andersson, 4 pts – 17. JM. Cuoq, 2 pts – 18. M. Rantanen, 2 pts – 19. A. Aigner, 1 pt – 20. J. Hänninen, 1 pt – **21. S. Ogier, 1 pt**.

\*Subject to final publications of the results by the FIA. Results are subject to routine fuel analysis too.

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