

# World Rally Championship

The teams travel from the previous event in Argentina to Finland, for one of the most popular Rallies in the circuit, the Neste Rally Finland. Fast, tree lined gravel roads with large yumps in this, one of the longest standing rallies in the world. Home to the famous Ouninpohja, a difficult and intimidating section well known for testing even the most experienced drivers.

Gronholm attacks hard from the start, pressing Seb Loeb in almost every stage. On a particularly nasty landing from a yump in SS5, Gronholm's co driver, Timo Rautiainen was left gasping for breath and unable to read the pace notes. Gronholm presses on without them until he can get Rautiainen back for some physiotherapy. Despite his opponent's setback, Loeb realizes that it's better to come in second than to risk an off, so he eases up on Gronholm, preserving a chance for title points. Gronholm really extends his lead out of SS14, topping all 4 stages of the Ouninpohja and subsequently, topping the podium. Toni Gardemeister battles early with P. Solberg, but is soon challenged by teammate Hirvonen, who lands in fifth place after Solberg in fourth. Loeb settles for his second place, beating Markko Martin in third.

From the fast gravel in Finland, it's the OMV ADAC Rallye Deutschland, the first asphalt event the drivers have seen in six months. Tight winding roads through the Mosel region, with kerbstones tight along the edges of some sections that could rip the bodywork off of an errant vehicle.

Duval was looking good as he and Subaru's Stephane Sarrazin led the times in the rain soaked shakedown. Could the asphalt proficient Duval be ready to make a comeback? As the stages progressed, he challenged teammate Loeb to some tight times, and the lead. Toni Gardemeister goes out with car trouble, "About 10 kilometres after the start I entered a right corner and the car just stopped," explained the frustrated Finn. Seems he had a bad relay on the car's main



photo by Warwick Patterson



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