



**FIA World Rally Championship  
Jordan Rally, 25-27 April 2008  
Event preview**

**Companc hits 30 in Jordan's Middle Eastern challenge**

Luis Pérez Companc, partnered by regular co-driver José María Volta, will mark 30 event starts next weekend as the fifth round of the FIA World Rally Championship heads to the Middle East for the Jordan Rally.

Making up the second half of the Munchi's Ford World Rally Team is Federico Villagra/Jorge Pérez Companc who head into the event coming off their best ever WRC result last month in Argentina where they finished sixth overall.

The Jordan Rally will become the first FIA WRC round to be held in an Arab country since 1976 and, as such, the event is set to be a sunny extravaganza with hype and excitement already rife throughout the country.

While this will be Pérez Companc's 30<sup>th</sup> WRC start – a feat only 106 WRC drivers have achieved – it will also be his penultimate for the 2008 season after the Argentine driver announced his intentions for a reduced calendar this year due to business and family commitments.

Villagra has continued with his success in the Argentine Rally Championship in between WRC events winning the most recent event, Rally de Bariloche, by just over half a minute. This now leaves the Argentine with a commanding 12 point lead in his national championship after winning both the opening two rounds.

Jordan is set to be one of the most unique events in recent times and is the latest addition to the WRC since Rally Ireland last November. The event is to be based on the shores of the famous Dead Sea – the world's lowest land point at 420 metres below sea level.

Conditions in Jordan are predicted to be in true desert form with daily temperatures set to reach anywhere up to 40 degrees centigrade and not a drop of rain in the forecast. High air temperatures will however mean even higher ones in the cockpit of the Munchi's Ford Focus RS WRC07 and both crews are set to expect temperatures inside the car in the 50 degree centigrade region.

Roads in Jordan are described as sandy, desert gravel with an extremely hard-packed surface. The stages look to be some of the smoothest in the championship and being all manmade will offer numerous high-speed excitement sections.

Currently the Munchi's Ford WRT lie four points ahead of Suzuki's works outfit despite the Japanese manufacturer competing on two more events than the Argentine squad. Villagra leads the way in the drivers' classification as he occupies eighth with points finishes on both WRC rounds he has attempted this year.



**Munchi's Ford World Rally Team Driver Federico Villagra said:**

"We will be looking to score points for the third event in a row in Jordan next week. It has been a great start to the year for both Jorge and I and hopefully this can continue over in the Middle East. I don't know too much about the conditions in Jordan but I have heard it will be dry and quite smooth which will be a big change from Argentina last month. I have been racing in the Argentine Rally Championship before this event and we won the Rally de Bariloche so I am feeling very good coming into this event. The plan will be to again score more points for the Munchi's team and stay ahead of Suzuki in the Manufacturers' Championship. This will be a new rally for everybody which could help our result and I am looking forward to starting the event next Friday morning."

**Munchi's Ford World Rally Team Driver Luis Pérez Companc said:**

"Jordan is going to be a very challenging event with the fast and slippery stages. I have heard that only a few drivers have competed in the Middle East which will make for an interesting competition because none of the drivers have pacenotes to look over, so it will be a fresh start for everybody. I don't think there will be any problem with the Pirelli tyre in Jordan because on this event we will reach the proper tyre temperature faster with the hot conditions. Punctures could be an issue with any slight off road excursions because I have heard there will be lots of stones on the side of the roads. My plan for this event is to finish inside the top-eight and score my first drivers' point this year. Also hopefully the Munchi's team can stay head of Suzuki in the manufacturers' after a good start so far."

**Event Information**

Date: 25-27 April 2008

Round: 5 of 16 FIA World Rally Championship

Based: Dead Sea, Jordan

Stage surface: Gravel

Total stage distance: 359.26km

Number of stages: 22

Longest stage: 41.45km (stage 19 & 22)

Lowest descent on stage: 350 metres below sea level (stage 20)

Central Service Park: Dead Sea

Shakedown Stage: 2.3 kilometres long

Ceremonial start: Emaar South Park