



**FIA World Rally Championship
Jordan Rally, 27 April 2008
Final Report**

Points for Villagra and dream finish for Clark in Jordan

Federico Villagra/Jorge Pérez Companc have equalled their best ever WRC result to make it three point scoring results on the trot, finishing the fifth round of the FIA World Rally Championship in sixth position. The result also sees the Munchi's Ford World Rally Team increase the gap on Suzuki and maintain fifth in the WRC Manufacturers' Championship.

In quite bizarre circumstances the Munchi's Ford WRT roster literally took an 11th hour shuffle which saw regulars Luis Pérez Companc/José María Volta replaced by Scotsman Barry Clark and Munchi's stand-in co-driver José Diaz; the Scot making his debut in a World Rally Car.

Clark's performance was nothing short of remarkable as he finished up in 12th overall just shy of scoring a manufacturers' point for the team. Villagra's result sees him gain three valuable points to move into outright ninth in the WRC Drivers' Championship.

Due to the ongoing situation within the farming industry in his native Argentina, Luis Pérez Companc had to return to the country on Wednesday morning after one full day's reconnaissance. With the Pérez Companc family involved in the food industry the decision was made to return to Argentina.

Originally heading over to Jordan as a rally technician for the Munchi's WRT, Clark arrived in the country at 03:00 Thursday morning meaning he would contest the event 'blind' - without any pacenotes - and with minimal sleep before shakedown; his first ever drive of the Ford Focus RS WRC07 on a gravel surface and in competition.

Villagra's performance was flawless throughout the event as he was justly rewarded with yet another points finish and an equal best WRC result. The only trouble for the Argentine Rally Champion was a small brake issue on Saturday which was rectified in midday service.

The event was the first time an Arab country had been a round of the WRC since 1976 and competition couldn't have been more fierce. Typical desert conditions were thrown at competitors who endured 40plus degree heat racing across the hard-packed sandy gravel roads in the Jordan Valley region.

Crews tackled 22 special stages over 359 gruelling kilometres of competitive action, many crews being overcome by the rocky topography which engulfed the manmade stages. Certainly a rally of attrition, the event had everything from the earth's lowest point to one of the longest stages on the WRC – *Jordan River* at 41.45 kilometres in length.



With a body down on the Munchi's mechanical squad, Clark was replaced by M-Sport employee Nicola Smith who became the first female, on-event rally technician to work on a Focus RS in the WRC. The next event in the Munchi's 2008 10-event campaign is Rally Sardinia where Villagra will be joined by Henning Solberg to score points for the side.

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

"I enjoyed this rally a lot and for myself and Jorge to score points on the last three events is a fantastic achievement. We found the first day very difficult because it was a new rally and the stages were tricky and it would be easy to make a mistake. Then on Saturday we made some changes to the differential and things felt much better, I had an improved feeling with the car and my times got faster from there. The high temperatures made it more difficult and we really had to concentrate hard on the very long last stage of the rally today. But now I'm feeling good and have got more confidence to go to Sardinia which is also the first event I drove for Munchi's last year."

Munchi's Ford World Rally Team Driver Barry Clark said:

"I still can't believe it yet. To get this opportunity at the last minute was amazing and to be honest it still hasn't sunk in fully. I had a difficult job to do here and was under strict instructions to finish and we very nearly finished inside the top-ten and just missed out on manufacturer points; that would have really been the icing on the cake. I found the stages quite demanding and not having any pacenotes made it even harder. My continued fitness training meant that I was well prepared for this event even with the last minute notice I was given and now I've got a lot of confidence for my next rally with the team in Turkey."

Final Leaderboard

1. M Hirvonen/J Lehtinen	FIN	Ford Focus RS	4h02m47.9s
2. D Sordo/M Marti	E	Citroën C4	+1m15.7s
3. C Atkinson/S Prevot	AUS	Subaru Impreza	+4m59.5s
4. H Solberg/C Menkerud	N	Ford Focus RS	+7m35.8s
5. M Wilson/S Martin	GB	Ford Focus RS	+10m41.7s
6. F Villagra/J Perez Compagno	RA	Ford Focus RS	+11m22.2s
7. J-M Latvala/M Attila	FIN	Ford Focus RS	+12m15.6s
8. G Galli/G Bernacchini	I	Ford Focus RS	+12m24.4s
9. K Al-Qassimi/M Orr	UAE	Ford Focus RS	+19m05.7s
10. S Loeb/D Elena	F	Citroën C4	+23m38.1s
12. B Clark/J Diaz	GB	Ford Focus RS	+31m19.2s

FIA WRC Manufacturer Standings

- | | | |
|-------------------------------------|--------------------------------------|------------------------|
| 1. BP Ford Abu Dhabi WRT – 57 pts | 2. Citroën Total WRT – 50 pts | 3. Subaru WRT – 39 pts |
| 4. Stobart VK M-Sport Ford – 29 pts | 5. Munchi's Ford WRT – 14 pts | 6. Suzuki WRT – 6 pts |

FIA WRC Driver Standings

- | | | | |
|------------------------|---------------------|------------------------|-------------------------|
| 1. M Hirvonen – 35 pts | 2. S Loeb – 30 pts | 3. C Atkinson – 28 pts | 4. J-M Latvala – 18 pts |
| 5. D Sordo – 17 pts | 6. G Galli – 12 pts | 7. H Solberg – 9 pts | 8. P Solberg – 9 pts |

* Results subject to routine fuel analysis