



**FIA World Rally Championship
BP Ultimate Acropolis Rally of Greece, 30 May-1 June 2008
Event Preview**

Munchi's arrange Acropolis attack with home advantage

The seventh round of the FIA World Rally Championship sees the Munchi's Ford World Rally Team head to Greece for the BP Ultimate Acropolis Rally. The event HQ this year has moved further to the north and in closer proximity to the Greek capital of Athens, allowing an exciting Ceremonial start at the stunning Acropolis on Thursday evening.

As with all 10 rounds of this year's Munchi's WRC campaign, Federico Villagra/Jorge Pérez Companc will contest the round as the team's number one crew. Joining them as the fourth consecutively new crew are local rally legends Aris Vovos/Loris Meletopoulos.

The event is set to be another strong outing for the Munchi's squad who will look to extend the gap over Suzuki in the Manufacturers' Championship which currently lies at an impressive nine points. Villagra too will be looking to add points to his personal tally in the Drivers' Championship which currently sees him with eight points and in ninth position outright.

For Villagra this will be only his second attempt at the Greek event but with some fine performances on gravel already this season he will be raring to go next Friday morning. Last year the Argentine looked promising in just his second event in a world rally car, until a clutch issue on day 2 forced him to SuperRally, losing a chunk of valuable time.

Since 1993 Vovos has competed on the Acropolis event 13 times - under WRC status - making him somewhat of a legend of the rally. His best result here came in 2004 driving a Ford Focus RS WRC. This year he will be reunited with the Focus RS in the latest specification with technical support from the world class M-Sport outfit. This will be his first WRC event in the 2008 championship.

This year most of the rally route has remained the same which last year offered well maintained roads that were easily accessible to the large number of spectators. Rally HQ however has moved to the north of Athens and this year will be based at the Tatoi military airport, some 25 kilometres from the Acropolis.

High humidity and temperatures are what really characterise this tricky event along with the rough and rocky stages which certainly make this a major rally of attrition. The forecast again suggests temperatures into the 30 degree plus centigrade bracket which will make fitness and concentration key factors of success here.

Like last year, the monster Aghii Theodori test will be among the 20 stages which make up the 339.94 kilometres of competitive distance. This year however the monster stage has been cut shorter by 16 kilometres but will still throw out a challenge to Pirelli and its new Scorpion gravel tyre which has proven its strength over all four gravel events so far this year.



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

"We had a good rally in Greece last year and it's an event that I like quite a lot. For sure the rally will be hard work, it will be hot and sunny and the stages take a lot of energy from the driver; last year there was a very long stage in which many people had problems. The event usually throws up some surprises. But I think it will benefit us to be doing another rally quite close after the last one as the feeling of the car is still in my head and our confidence is good after Sardinia. The focus is still on finishing the rally without any problems and if we can do that it will be a good opportunity to collect more points for both me and the Munchi's team. I will be able to get some tips from my team mate for this rally who is a local driver and will know the conditions well."

Munchi's Ford World Rally Team Driver Aris Vovos said:

"The Acropolis rally has always been the most important event of our annual program. Therefore I have to admit that I am a little excited, especially this year that we will be using a top line car and we have no excuse on not performing well in front of our fans. Ten days ago we had a test in Sardinia in order to familiarise ourselves with the Focus WRC07 and in order to set it up according to our needs. At the beginning of the test I found the car far away from my driving style, but thanks to Roman Kresta's assistance we have managed to come to a very good result. I am now looking forward to driving the car in the stages that we know well. I believe that the Pirelli tyres are very strong this year, but they will be the key factor in this year's event."

Event information

Date: 30 May-1 June 2008
Round: 7 of 15 FIA World Rally Championship
Based: Athens, Greece
Stage surface: Gravel
Total stage distance: 339.94km
Number of stages: 20
Longest stage: Aghii Theodori – 32.16km (stages 8 & 11)
Central Service Park: Tatoi, Athens
Ceremonial start: Acropolis