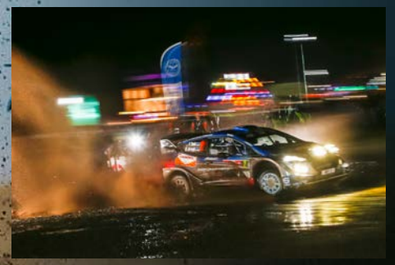
ROOKIE'S GUIDE TO RALLYING

NEW TO THE WRC? IF SO, DAVID EVANS IS HERE TO HELP...









Welcome. You've arrived. This is rallying. This is Dayinsure Wales Rally GB. Brace yourself for the most staggering sensory assault. That's assuming you're reading this leaning up against a tree in Dyfi, killing time as you wait for a world champion, 380 horses and a lot of noise.

If you're reading it in your favourite armchair on a future Saturday evening hoping to avoid Strictly, you're going to be disappointed. Dancing's just dancing. But rallying's dancing at 100mph, on snow, mud, ice, gravel and asphalt.

But what really is rallying? For those of you used to consuming your motor sport trackside, you've ventured into a very different – but we like to think very much better – parallel universe.

The first thing you need to know is that you'll one be seeing one car at a time in the corner before you. You'll also notice, there's no run-off, no ARMCO and no gravel traps. Just gravel. Rallying is motor sport in an environment we can relate to, in cars we recognise as the ones we buy every time we've paid the last one off.

World Championship rounds - of which Dayinsure Wales Rally GB is the 11th - start on a Thursday evening and finish on a Sunday lunchtime. This year's event will start by returning to the popular venue at Tir Prince, just outside Towyn on the north Wales coast where the cars and crews will go against the clock on a track.

Next morning, the cars leave their service areas in the Deeside Rally Village. Service is where they are tended to by a team of mechanics who can do loads of things like changing gearboxes or front suspension in no time at all and without any invoices or abuse of the driver's wallet. They also do the more mundane work here, such as cleaning the windscreen, topping up washer fluid and making sure the crew have a couple of energy bars or bananas in their door pockets.

Out of service, the cars are driven along liaison sections – between service and the competitive stages – in accordance with each individual country's traffic laws. So, where the speed limit's 30mph in Newtown for you and I, it's exactly the same for them. If they break the law on the road, they're treated just like you and I.

Dayinsure Wales Rally GB has 23 stages in 2018 spread over Thursday, Friday, Saturday and Sunday. A stage is the name for the road between the stage start and flying finish. It's the time it takes a crew to get from start to finish that decides who's quickest in that stage while the accumulated time from all 23 stages will decide the winner of the rally.

Stages in the WRC are run on all surfaces and to all lengths, but in Wales this year they range from the brand new street stage in Llandudno to the much more typical 20Km test in Myherin first thing Saturday morning.

In these stages, the aim for the crew is simple, to go as fast as humanly and mechanically possible without crashing, spinning or breaking the car. And that's the challenge, that's the hook – the race is against the clock. Fastest wins.

We could get more technical here, but let's save that for another day. For now, put the programme down and wait for your world and these woods to be rocked.

GLOSSARY

CO-DRIVER
Deals with the timing and paperwork in the car. Loosely speaking, tells the driver where to go, how fast and when.

FLYING FINISH
Doesn't fly and isn't a Finn. This is the end of the timed section of the special stage, marked out by a chequered flag. Called 'flying' because the timing beam is broken at speed.

INTERCOM
The mic and earphone fitted inside the helmets of drivers and co-drivers, allowing them to hear each other over the noise of the engine.

OTL
Over Time Limit. Crews are given an allotted time to get from control to control and if, for whatever reason, they don't make it to the next control in that allotted time then they are deemed OTL and retire from the day.

PACENOTES
A set of notes describing the nature of the special stage dictated by the driver to the co-driver during the recce, which are then read back to the driver to tell them exactly what corners, crests and jumps are coming when the crew is running at competitive speed.

POWER STAGE
This is usually the final stage of each rally, where five bonus points are given to the fastest crew; four to the second, and so on. The stage is also shown live on global television. This year our Power Stage will be on Sunday morning in Gwydir and the final stage will be around the Great Orme.

RALLY2
This is the regulation allowing a crew to return to the overall classification despite retiring from a rally and not completing all of the special stages on the previous day. A time penalty of five minutes is imposed on the competitor for each stage they fail to complete.

RETIRE
Doesn't involve stopping work or taking a pension. Means a crew hasn't made the next control because they've gone off the road, suffered a mechanical problem or got lost. Providing the car's safety structure is undamaged, the car can be re-entered the following day under Rally2 regulations.

REMOTE TYRE FITTING ZONE
This is what happens in Newtown on Saturday. It's the same as Deeside, but on a much smaller scale – it's remote from the main service (hence the name). Teams are permitted to fit new tyres to the car and work on the cars – but only using parts and tools carried in the car itself.

ROADBOOK
This is the book which guides co-drivers from the start to the finish of an event. Every junction on the route is illustrated offering clear direction on which way to go.

RECCE
The crews are allowed to drive through all of the special stages twice before the event in order to make the vital pacenotes used to describe the road. While the drivers take the stages flat out, the recce must be conducted at no more than 80kph (50mph) and the cars are fitted with a tracking device to monitor speeds and location.

SCRUTINEERING
Every car is inspected ahead of the rally to make sure it complies with the FIA's stringent safety requirements. It's also a check to make sure the car's technical specification is in-keeping with the category in which it's entered. And it's not just the cars, the crews overalls and crash helmets will also be inspected.

RALLY VILLAGE
This is what's at Deeside - in circuit racing parlance: the paddock and pits. The cars come and go from their service areas at the Rally Village every day. They are prepared and repaired at a short service session in the morning and a longer session in the evening.

STAGES
This is where the rally is won and lost. The crews are timed to the tenth of a second between the start and finish and the accumulated time from all of the stages decides the classification. WRC rounds are run on Tarmac, snow and gravel – Dayinsure Wales Rally GB is predominantly gravel.

CONTROLS
The start and finish of every stage and service park has a control and the crews must enter the control at precisely the right minute to avoid a penalty.

WRC2
This is the main feeder class to the WRC. Rallying's equivalent to GP2. The cars are four-wheel drive, but can be two-litre non-turbo (S2000) or 1.6 with a turbo (known as R5 or RRC). These cars are generally about 40bhp down on the World Rally Cars – but just as spectacular. Crews competing in the WRC2 score on six from their first seven rallies.

WRC3
Run for two-wheel drive cars with engines up to two-litre non-turbo or 1.6-litre with a turbo. Drivers can score on six from their first seven rounds.

WORLD RALLY CAR
The Formula One cars of the forests. Powered by 1.6-litre turbo engines with four-wheel drive, these are the fastest cars in the top class. Overall victory will go to one of these.