



FIA European Rally Championship 2018: Round 8 of 8, Rally Liepāja, 12-14 October 2018

## ERC RALLY LIEPĀJA POST-EVENT PRESS CONFERENCE

Media Centre, 19h30, 14 October

### Present:

Nikolay Gryazin/Yaroslav Fedorov, Sports Racing Technologies, first position  
Chris Ingram/Ross Whittock, Toksport WRT, second position  
Fredrik Åhlin/Joakim Sjöberg, CA1 Sport, third position  
Mārtiņš Sesks, ADAC Opel Rallye Junior Team

### Q:

Congratulations Nikolay, rally winner, ERC Junior U28 winner and ERC Junior U28 champion. How good does that feel?

### NG:

Yes, I really enjoyed this fight and season, so I want to say thank you to the team, for the organisation, co-driver and everybody who helps. It was an unbelievable journey. Also, a big thanks to competitors who are very fast in the stages. It's almost improving everyone in this battle.

### Q:

It was a very impressive performance from you – but how was that possible?

### NG:

In these stages, I know this type of gravel and in some places I just drive comfortably. But it's very fast stages here and the gaps are not a big difference because it's a high average speed. You need to be really brave here to drive fast. It's not so much technical but really brave to go flat out in some corners and believe in the grip.

### Q:

What's next for you – world championship and a few ERC events in 2019 we understand?

### NG:

Next season I think we will drive some rounds of WRC2 and also, for this prize, we will drive two rounds of ERC also.

### Q:

You've co-driven Nikolay for a long time now but just how impressive has this season been?



**YF:**

We can say that this is the result of our huge work and it's always very interesting to work with a professional team and a very fast guy like Nikolay. One of the secrets of our crew is lots of humour during the rally and good communication. As Nikolay said, many thanks to our opponents Chris [Ingram] and [Fabian] Kreim. It was a big risk this year because we missed Azores Airlines Rallye and we had only one chance of a mistake and we made this mistake on Rally di Roma Capitale. That's why it was very important to show a good result here with big pressure. All of Latvia is looking for Nikolay so it was a big pressure for him, so I'm proud that he made this result with this pressure.

**Q:**

Champion in ERC Junior U27 last year but not quite the ERC Junior U28 champion this year. But given your lack of gravel experience in an R5 car you must be pleased?

**CI:**

We're really happy with the season from our performance point of view. These guys to my left have been an incredible benchmark with incredible pace on every rally, so thanks to those guys for pushing me and massive congratulations again to you for winning the championship. For us it's been a massive learning curve with lots of highs and lows. Ross [Whittock, co-driver] has done an amazing job, the whole team's done an incredible job and really helped me. Hopefully, we can carry on because it's been very difficult with the budget. I'm disappointed because we've worked so hard but we're at the end with nothing. So hopefully we can carry on from this.

**Q:**

What's next for you Chris?

**CI:**

Nothing at the moment, no money. But thank you for a fantastic rally as well, always enjoyable and hopefully we'll be back next year.

**Q:**

Your partnership with Chris is more than a year old now so what do you think of his progression – what can he achieve next year?

**RW:**

It's been an interesting year. It's been a hard year, to be honest. Moving up to the R5 is a big step. We've had to change a few things but I think the progression through the year has been really good. To finish this rally and with yesterday's pace, we were very close to Nikolay, I think we can be quite happy with how this year's going.

**Q:**

A great battle with Fabian Kreim for the final podium – just how intense was that?

**FA:**

For sure it was a really intense battle. Like you say, it was really close going into the last loop and I knew

from yesterday we were struggling quite a lot on the second pass, so I was a little bit nervous about what was going to happen. But myself and Joakim work really well together and found some small things to improve. The last three stages were good. We made a small mistake in stage 11, where we went wide in a junction, so dropped some time. It was actually quite good because I knew that going the last one we had to win or not win, there was no margin to play it safe. I went really, really hard. It was a good stage for sure, so really happy. Like I said the whole week, last time I was on gravel was in May. I'm unfortunately not doing much rallying this year and it took some time to get back into it. As I said before the event, both Nikolay and Chris are really fast and it showed, especially as we couldn't keep up with them. But still, I'm really happy with third.

**Q:**

A return to the ERC in 2019 is the plan so do you have what it takes to be next year's ERC Junior U28 champion?

**FA:**

Yeah. I think we need to change some small things in the package and we can hopefully be very competitive next year, so I'm looking forward to it.

**Q:**

It's been quite a few weeks for you with the birth of your second child and now you finish the year with a podium finish in the ERC. You must be a very happy man right now?

**JS:**

Yeah, I'm very happy. I think we showed on the last loop what we can do. Unfortunately, we didn't get the whole package together from the beginning of the rally but I think we showed everybody what we can do and this is good for the future.

**Q:**

Not quite the ERC Junior U27 event win but a great year with three championship titles?

**MS:**

Well, for sure it wasn't the best pace that we could have but the main goal was to achieve the ERC3 category title and the Latvian one was also important, so we are three-time champions in a row in Latvia. Basically the season goals are achieved.

**Q:**

The future is very bright for you so what's next?

**MS:**

We'll see. We'll start working on that next week and then in some time we should know what we'll do. But nothing for the moment.