



## Rallye Automobile Monte-Carlo

21-24 January 2009  
IRC Round: 1



REVIEW

# Ogier wins in Monte Carlo

The Monte Carlo Rally, watched by seven million television viewers on Eurosport, was won by Sebastien Ogier, driving for the BFGoodrich Drivers' Team in a Peugeot 207 S2000 run by Kronos Racing.

2009



Sebastien Ogier

Ogier took the lead after the Skoda of Juho Hanninen retired on the first stage of the final leg. Hanninen's Fabia S2000 had led from the opening morning all the way until the last stage of Friday, when the Finn picked up a puncture five kilometres into the stage.

Determined to recover the two minutes he lost, Hanninen went off on the first corner of the following stage: SS10 on Saturday morning. The same stage also claimed the Peugeot UK car of Kris Meeke, which crashed out of fourth place on some slushy snow. This left the way clear for Ogier to claim the lead, which he held all the way to the finish after the four epic Col de Turini night stages.

"For sure it was a great experience for us," said Ogier. "I didn't expect to win at all, as I didn't know the event and it was the first time for me in the car. The Peugeot Super 2000 is really fun to drive. It's halfway between a Super 1600 car and a World Rally Car: a really good compromise."

As a result, Ogier – a familiar face on the World Rally Championship – became the very first points leader of the 2009 IRC drivers' standings. "I think it's a really good championship," he concluded. "In the IRC there seem to be around 10 drivers who can win each rally. It's really good for us and for the public."

Peugeot Belgium's Freddy Loix finished in second place, having challenged for a podium position from the start of the event. Privateer Abarth driver Toni Gardemeister was set to finish runner-up, but the Finn retired on a road section with just two stages to go because of an alternator failure.

"This year we have lots of good drivers and good cars," said Loix, who finished runner-up in the 2008 IRC series. "Juho Hanninen and Jan Kopecky showed here in Monaco that they can go quickly and the Skoda is going to be a real contender. There are five or six drivers who can win the title."

Peugeot driver Stephane Sarrazin finished third, despite losing a wheel on the first loop of the iconic Col de Turini stages at the end of the event. He beat the Skoda of Jan Kopecky – which lost some time with power steering problems – and the factory Abarth of Giandomenico Basso.



Jan Kopecky

"I really enjoyed this rally, but it was one of the toughest ones I have ever done," said Sarrazin, who forms part of Peugeot's Le Mans team. "We've got a busy programme with Le Mans this year, but I would love to come back and do some more round of the IRC as the competition is really good."

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Reigning IRC champion Nicolas Vouilloz retired on the second day after breaking a steering arm on his Peugeot Belgium 207 against a rock, while Abarth's Anton Alen lost sixth place when his car's clutch failed on the final road section.

The IRC 2WD Cup also got underway on the Monte Carlo Rally. Italian Fiat Punto S1600 driver Manuel Villa claimed the class lead on the opening day, and gradually pulled out an advantage over the Peugeot 206 of local man Guy Mottard. Fiat came home from Monaco as the early leaders of the 2009 IRC 2WD Cup, while Peugeot led the overall manufacturers' standings.

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### Rallye Automobile Monte-Carlo results- IRC

1 Ogier/Ingrassia	Peugeot 207 S2000	4h40m45.7s
2 Loix/Smets	Peugeot 207 S2000	+1m43.6s
3 Sarrazin/Renucci	Peugeot 207 S2000	+2m21.6s
4 Kopecky/Stary	Skoda Fabia S2000	+3m17.3s
5 Basso/Dotta	Abarth Grande Punto S2000	+4m28.0s
6 Romeyer/Fournel	Mitsubishi Lancer Evo 9	+20m30.3s
7 Burri/Gordon	Abarth Grande Punto S2000	+21m23.0s
8 Artru/Virieux	Mitsubishi Lancer Evo 9	+25m50.7s
9 Cavallini/Zanella	Peugeot 207 S2000	+28m44.2s
10 Knapick/Moura	Mitsubishi Lancer Evo 9	+38m32.7s

Two-wheel drive winner: Manuel Villa (Fiat Punto S1600)