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M-SPORT CONFIRM ØSTBERG AND CAMILLI FOR 2016

M-Sport World Rally Team will field a mix of proven speed and raw talent as Mads Østberg and Eric Camilli take to the Ecoboost-powered Ford Fiesta RS WRCs for a programme in the 2016 FIA World Rally Championship (WRC).

As a proven podium contender on all loose-surface events, Østberg's consistent speed will see the team challenge for podiums and potential wins throughout the season.

With one victory and 14 podiums to his name, the Norwegian is a proven performer and delivered a breakthrough performance when he first took to the wheel of the Fiesta RS WRC in 2011.

Securing fourth place in this year's drivers' championship, Østberg has lost none of his speed and the team are convinced that more wins are well within reach.

Having targeted a number of events in which the Norwegian has the ability to challenge for victory, M-Sport have high hopes of returning the Blue Oval to the top step of the podium.

In a surprise signing for the Cumbrian squad, Camilli will be given a chance at the WRC's top flight – competing behind the wheel of the top-specification Fiesta RS WRC.

The Frenchman piloted a Ford Fiesta R5 in this year's WRC 2 category and instantly impressed with his natural flair and talent behind the wheel.

He may have only contested 10 WRC events to date, but M-Sport has a reputation for fostering new talent and are highly motivated by the potential he has to offer.

Despite his limited experience, the team believe that Camilli has the makings of a future world champion and aim to nurture his talents throughout 2016 and beyond.

Mads Østberg said:

"I am really looking forward to the season ahead and honoured to have been welcomed back into the M-Sport team. The Ford Fiesta RS WRC has formed a big part of my career and it's a nice feeling to be heading back to a team where I have achieved a lot of success in the past.

"Loose-surface rallies are my favourite, and we saw this year that the new Fiesta can be very competitive on gravel. Our first aim will be to get up to speed and challenge for strong results. Sweden is obviously a real highlight for me – and one that I will be targeting – but I think we can also be very competitive on a lot of events that follow.

"I've changed my driving style over the past two years so it will be interesting to see how that works with the Fiesta and whether or not I'll have to go back to my previous style. It's difficult to say how quickly we will be able to adapt, but I remember the Fiesta being really easy to drive. We always had good set-ups and good speed so it shouldn't be too much of a drama.

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"I feel as though my driving has progressed a lot recently, and the plan is to continue that progression next year. I want to make another improvement in speed, challenge for more podiums and I think wins could also be a possibility. I want to get faster, and I think I can do that without sacrificing the consistency.

"Another season with a top team was our goal for next year and I would like to thank Malcolm and the team for their continued belief in me. I can't wait to get back behind the wheel of the Fiesta and, if everything goes to plan, it could be a great year for us."

Eric Camilli said:

"This is an amazing opportunity for me and I am extremely proud to join the M-Sport team in 2016. I can't wait to get started. We'll have our first test this week and I'm really looking forward to getting to know the team and the car.

"I have only contested a few WRC events so I recognise that I am extremely lucky to have been given this opportunity. Malcolm is such a big part of the WRC so his confidence and faith in me really does mean a lot; it's very special.

"The priority for next season will be to discover the level required to compete in a world rally car and to learn the Ford Fiesta RS WRC. I know it will be fast – faster than anything I've ever driven before – so I will need to take everything step by step and work hard to improve every aspect of what it takes to become a world class driver.

"I want to do the best job that I can, but I know that I can't put too much pressure on myself at the beginning. I am very motivated, but I know that every driver has to start somewhere and that I will require time to be competitive at the highest level.

"This really is a fantastic opportunity and I want to say a huge thank you to Malcolm and the entire M-Sport team. Everyone has been so welcoming and I want to do them proud as I develop my skills as a manufacturer driver."

Team Principal, Malcolm Wilson OBE, said:

"With Mads and Eric I think we have a very strong team going into 2016. Mads is a proven podium contender and one of the most consistently quick drivers in the championship. As for Eric, I honestly can't remember the last time that I was this excited about a new driver.

"We know what Mads is capable of and I believe he has the ability to put M-Sport and Ford back on the top step of the podium next year. There are a number of events in which he can challenge for victory and that has to be our aim for the season ahead.

"Eric's WRC experience is limited, but I truly believe that he has all the makings of a future world champion. He has already proven how quickly he can adapt to new cars and new events and I think his progression will be swift.

"A lot of thought has gone into our driver signings and I think a very exciting season lies ahead. The team are more motivated than ever and we are all looking forward to discovering what success our new signings can deliver."

- ENDS -

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