

For Immediate Release

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## Journalist and F1 Champion to make World Rally debut in severe conditions

- **Sports journalist Tom Cary to finish rally campaign at top level as former F1 Champ switches disciplines to make his works debut on world stage**

Rally Sweden (11-14 February), the opening round of the 2010 World Rally Championship, will be memorable for two competitors at both ends of the rally spectrum.

British sports journalist Tom Cary, from London, will reach the summit of his Daily Telegraph Rally Challenge – co-driving in his first World Championship event and trying to finish Rally Sweden with a flourish. Meanwhile, F1-to-rally man Kimi Raikkonen will make history when he makes his full time World Rally Championship debut driving for Citroen in the same event.

Both men face tough debuts in the proverbial freezer. This year's Rally Sweden looks set to be the coldest for two decades, according to rally spokesman Hakan Toner, *"It will be the coldest for 20 years. There is a cold front coming in from Russia and we could experience temperatures as low as minus 26 degrees. It will be cold with lots of snow and snow banks."*

The prospect of being severely tested by the weather - not to mention the three and a half day, 1879 kilometre event in Sweden's Varmland forest region - has not deterred Tom Cary, but rather touched his sense of adventure. *"I travelled through the area extensively a while back and loved the landscape and enjoyed the adventure of the harsh weather. But trying to concentrate at high speed in a rally car when there is 'white out', or the mesmerising affect of snow fall, is another matter. It has to be more difficult if you are Kimi Raikkonen, as the fans expect him to be competitive. We just want to finish, and to do that we have to survive 21 special stages in harsh conditions. None the less, it is an adventure that I am looking forward to! A testing way to finish my 'Rally Challenge' for the newspaper."*

Tom will be navigating for driver and Sky Sports motor sport presenter Tony Jardine, a survivor of six Arctic Rally challenges and a finisher in this event two years ago. Subaru Norway's Managing Director Arne Berg has generously helped the media duo, providing the team with a brand new Subaru Impreza showroom class rally car, which would normally be destined for Norway's Subaru Cup competition. The car has been built by Norwegian rally preparation specialist Arne Voldsund, but the team will be an Anglo-Norwegian combination, made up of Tony's regular team, led by ProSpeed's Olly Marshall, and Frode Haugland of Haugland Motorsport, the son of rally legend John Haugland.

The team is being supported on this adventure by Pirelli, who have made special studded tyres for the event, and Doodson Broking Group, who specialise in motor sport insurance as well as major event broking. As the official supplier to the World Rally Championship, Pirelli has enormous experience of producing tyres to cope with all types of conditions, and Jardine is looking forward to testing them out, *"When the big freeze gripped Britain a few weeks ago it caused major upheaval and the roads were treacherous. I thought, 'great, more practice for Rally Sweden', but the reality was that drivers were lucky to reach 15 mph. And yet we will be touching speeds of nearly 90 mph on the Special Stages in competition, due to Pirelli tyre technology and their studs which will find grip like an ice boot."*

Jardine and Cary have headed to the John Haugland Winter Rally School, based at the Bardola Hotel in Geilo, and are testing at John's world famous snow stage and frozen lake in Dagali. Here, Jardine and Cary will acclimatise, familiarise themselves with the new car and learn ice driving techniques and survival training from the guru Haugland, who has taught rally stars such as Colin McRae, Richard Burns and Norwegian World Champion Petter Solberg. John Haugland, 9 times class winner in a Skoda on the RAC Rally and a driver who has won rallies all over the world, said, *"We will help Tony adapt his driving to the harsh conditions and then let Tom have a drive so he can understand what happens on ice. Most importantly we will teach basic survival tips, as Rally Sweden will be a severe low temperature test. If you 'go off' you could be stranded for hours in the icy wilderness. It's easy to wander off the wrong way and get frost bite, nausea or worse, and end up collapsing. We will check their equipment and make sure they have their basic survival kit with them, as well as showing them how to look after the car in minus 30 degree temperatures."*

Both the team and drivers will need to find warmth in the Swedish freezer. Regular partner Alpinestars has produced special fireproof thermals for Jardine and Cary, whilst McLaren Automotive Development Engineer and part time ProSpeed team member Andy Beale has had the advantage of already being out in the Arctic, acclimatising to the conditions. Helmet supplier Arai has also been urging Jardine and Cary to try a new intercom system, which works well in difficult rally conditions, but the team have not found time to do so yet - something they may regret as their double layer fireproof balaclavas, worn under their crash helmets, can sometimes restrict sound.

The start of the new World Rally Championship season in Sweden brings with it the prospect of another great battle at the front. Ford's Mikko Hirvonen, who won the Intercontinental Rally Challenge opening round in Monte Carlo, and six times World Rally Champion Sebastien Loeb will be leading the charge, however, with Formula One Grand Prix star Kimi Raikkonen thrown into the mix, plus former World Rally Champion Petter Solberg and twice champion Marcus Gronholm making their return, the snow will be flying.

Olly Marshall, team boss of York based ProSpeed and former Junior World Rally Championship driver summed up the rally ahead, *"It's going to be a great battle out front, but we are more focused on achieving a good finish for Tony and particularly Tom in his last rally. We want our Pirelli and Doodson Broking Group-backed Subaru to go all the way, and for Tony and Tom to build their speed. They are in a much faster car than they are used to and things will happen very quickly in the turbo charged four wheel drive Subaru. With high snow walls and tight forest tracks there is no margin for error. Our job will be to try and keep them going."*

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