



In Ferrol, a puncture forces Vinyes-Mercader into second place among the 2WD's.

Joan Vinyes-Jordi Mercader (Suzuki Swift S1600) broke their winning streak in the 42nd Ferrol Rally. A puncture on the first pass through Monfero-Monfero relegated them to second place of the Spanish Championship classification, in the two wheel drive (2WD) category up to 1600cc. Up until that moment Vinyes-Mercader had clearly controlled the Ferrol event, they had the best time of their category in all the special stages and the differences in time seem to be definitive. however...

Moreover Vinyes-Mercader also managed to consistently remain in the top 10 of the scratch classification in a rally that was bound to be difficult and ended up being even worse than expected. This time, the Suzuki Motorsport driver finished 6th.

The scratch victory in Ferrol was the Vallejo brothers', who staged an amazing debut of their new Porsche 911 GT3. Jonathan Pérez-Enrique Velasco (Peugeot 207 S2000) and Alberto Hevia-Alberto Iglesias (Skoda Fabia S2000) were the other two teams on the podium.

Vinyes-Mercader clearly led the first stage of the event. After showing their efficiency in very dirty special stages, they finished the day on Friday with a 31" advantage over their teammates of the Suzuki Motorsport team, Antxustegi-Suárez. Furthermore they settled into fourth place in the scratch classification.

The second part of the event started exactly the same way. Vinyes remained leader of the 2WD vehicles in the most feared special stage (Miño-Vilamaior-Irixoa, 27.33km); however, the incident occurred just after that and was crucial at the end of the rally. A puncture to the right front wheel forced him to slow down for 13km, which turned his advantage into a disadvantage of 25". With just two special stages to go, Antxustegi became the leader of the 2WD classification and he kept it that way until the end, despite Vinyes' last attempts.

Vinyes wanted to start the second half of the season on the right foot, but this time not everything went according to plan; this was his comment after the rally: ***To start with a victory after the holidays is always important. however this time we didn't quite get there. The puncture made us waste a lot of time and there were only two special stages left... It was very difficult and our main goal was to finish the rally. That's what races are all about and today we experienced the worst side of them. We need to keep going and focus on the next extremely important event, which will take place in two weeks, the Príncipe de Asturias.*** The Suzuki driver also commented on the plan for and the actual development of the Galician race: ***We started the rally as we always do, we wanted to push from the very beginning and try to build time differences that worked for us in the 2WD category. During Friday's special stages the plan worked perfectly. On Saturday, we needed to keep the pace and try and get good results towards the scratch classification. As I've said, everything went according to plan, until the puncture on the first pass through Monfero. It was a pity that the advantage we had wasn't enough to keep us in first place.***

Vinyes made it very clear that he was completely focused on the next event in his calendar, the Rally Príncipe de Asturias. It will take place in September (on the 8th, 9th and 10th) with the usual schedule - two stages and more than 230km timed - and the cities of Gijón and Oviedo as the nerve centres of this season's first and only race in Asturias for the Suzuki Motorsport team.

Press Service.

Classifications 42nd Ferrol Rally.

Scratch.

1.-Vallejo-Vallejo (Porsche 911 GT3) 1h45'39.5 , 2.-Perez-Velasco (Peugeot 207 S2000) a 0'42.0 , 3.-Hevia-Iglesi-
as (Skoda Fabia S2000) a 1'41.6 , 4.-Meira-Bañobre (Mitsubishi Lancer Evo X), a 3'21.9 , 5.-Anxustegi-Suarez
(Suzuki Swift S1600) a 5'06.8 , **6.-Vinyes-Mercader (Suzuki Swift S1600) a 4'34.2 .**

2WD Spanish Cup up to 1600cc.

1.-Anxustegi-Suarez (Suzuki Swift S1600) 1h50'46.3 , 2.-Vinyes-Mercader (Suzuki Swift S1600) 0'17.9 ,
3.-Iglesias-Iglesias (Ford Fiesta R2) a 5'59.3 .