



SQUARE LEFT

NEWS

Meeke grabs fourth as Evans recovers to sixth



Citroen Racing's Kris Meeke and Paul Nagle took fourth place on the final stage of the opening round of the 2018 FIA World Rally Championship, Rallye Monte-Carlo.

A fastest time through the Power Stage saw the Northern Irishman claim 17 points, putting him level with Toyota's Jari-Matti Latvala.

Meek had started the final day behind Esapekka Lappi after passing him on Saturday when the Finn was forced to stop and change a puncture.

However, a mistake from Lappi on the final test relegated him to seventh to the benefit of Meek.

"It was the hardest Monte-Carlo I have ever experienced," Meek admitted.

"We had everything: sheer ice on slick tyres on Thursday evening, rain on Friday, snow on Saturday and frost on the Col de Turini today.

"I'm surprised to finish the rally with 17 points, but I'll certainly take them!

"We now have to stay humble and keep working hard to improve."

Elfyn Evans and Daniel Barritt had a more trying event, notching up two fastest stage times on their return to the M-Sport Ford World Rally Team but having to settle for sixth.

Their event unravelled in Thursday night's darkness on the icy run from Thoard-Sisteron.

Marginally cutting a corner, Evans was forced to stop and change a puncture, conceding four minutes on the season's first special stage.

He also should have benefited from Lappi's misfortune on the final stage, but was overhauled by Hyundai's Thierry Neuville by just a single second.

"It's been a tough rally and we had a really tough start losing so much time on the very first stage," Evans admitted.

“Over the following days I think we were there or thereabouts in terms of outright speed, but overall there were just too many little errors.

“The comforting thing is the speed is there, but we still need to be better.”

The next round of the World Rally Championship is Rally Sweden from 15-18 February.