



FLYING FINN GRÖNHOLM STEERS FORD FOCUS RS INTO SPOTLIGHT

Cardiff, 28 November 2008 – Ford's spectacular new Focus RS road car will be driven in public for the first time during a display at next weekend's Wales Rally GB. Marcus Grönholm, who led Ford to consecutive manufacturers' titles in the FIA World Rally Championship in 2006 and 2007, will be behind the wheel of Ford's fastest-ever production car during the demonstration inside Cardiff's Millennium Stadium.

The 74.500 capacity stadium, the home of Wales' national rugby union team, will host the final speed test of the rally's second leg next Saturday evening (6 December). Before the action begins the much-anticipated Focus RS, which goes on sale next spring, will take pride of place in a cavalcade of Ford's heritage Rallye Sport (RS) road cars stretching back nearly 40 years.

Double world champion Grönholm, now retired from full-time competition, is an ambassador for Ford of Europe and the 40-year-old Finn will fly in to power a pre-production Performance Blue 2009 Focus RS around the purpose-built track. After a parade lap of the previous five RS cars, Grönholm will speed into the stadium in the latest machine for a run around the special stage.

The new car is powered by a turbocharged Duratec 2.5-litre, five-cylinder engine. With its unique camshafts, revised cylinder head and gasket, intake and manifold system, the unit is designed to deliver 300 PS and 440 Nm peak torque. Combined with a six-speed transmission, this translates to 0-62 mph acceleration in under six seconds and a targeted top speed of 161 mph. Yet the designers have succeeded in combining high performance with a car that is eminently practical for everyday use.

The combination of Quaife Automatic Torque Biasing limited-slip differential and innovative RevoKnuckle front-suspension system allows a class-leading balance of traction, handling and performance to be derived from front- as opposed to all-wheel drive, with consequent power-to-weight advantages.

A wider track, enhanced drive-shafts and rear anti-roll bar, revised springs and dampers, retuned steering and updated brakes all contribute to outstanding sports handling. A specially developed version of Ford's ESP system provides added safety.

The metallic Performance Blue of the car Grönholm will drive reflects the livery of the Focus RS World Rally Car with which Ford competes in the FIA World Rally Championship, although the RS will also be available in a new metallic Ultimate Green plus Frozen White. Similarly, the black twin-blade rear spoiler echoes both RS models of the past and the Focus RS WRC that inspired the latest version.

Ford's RS badge was last used on the first-generation Focus RS in 2002. Over 38 years it has also graced Fiesta, Escort and Sierra models, as the Cardiff cavalcade will reflect.

The Cardiff stage of Wales Rally GB, the last round of the FIA World Rally Championship, is sure to attract big crowds, keen to see the final act of the battle between Ford and Citroen for the 2008 manufacturers' title at close quarters.

The parade begins at 16.45 h local time with the competition starting at 18.15 h.

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Persbericht vindt u op www.fordpers.be

Foto's in hoge resolutie vindt u vanaf zaterdagochtend 6 december op www.worldrallypics.com/ford

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