

# PACENOTES

THE JORDAN RALLY NEWSLETTER

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The breathtaking Jordan Rally

## Jordan WRC set to deliver something special

Jordan is set to deliver on its promise of unveiling something special to the motorsporting world by staging the second most compact rally of the 2008 FIA World Rally Championship (WRC) from April 24-27.

The Jordan Rally has been completely revamped in readiness to welcome the world and it has created an event tailor made to the needs of the modern day global championship, which is visiting the Arab World for the first time since Morocco in 1976.

As a result, the 2008 Jordan Rally WRC will consist of 950 kms in total, of which 343 will present the world's top drivers with some of the most testing competitive kilometres of the year. The remaining kilometres will be the road sections that link the timed special stages.

"When we announced our bid to join this prestigious championship back in 2005 we listened to what the WRC expected of a new event," said HRH Prince Feisal Al Hussein, Chairman of Jordan Motorsport which manages and organises the Jordan Rally WRC. "We realised then that what we had was simply not good enough and so we have completely changed our rally to meet the expectations of a world-class event.

"It has taken us three years and I am happy to announce that we now have a compact and centralised event which is in line with what we promised to deliver to the WRC family three years ago."

Jordan is now the second-most compact event on the 2008 calendar behind Mexico and all the action will be held within 40 kms of the Dead Sea where the rally headquarters, Service Park and official hotel will be located.

The northern Rumman forest stages have been removed for 2008 in preference for two new twisty and challenging stages closer to the rally nucleus. One of those exciting new 'venues' - the Jordan River Stage - is 33 kms and the longest stage of the rally.

As a unique feature to the rally, drivers will be competing at 400m below sea level at the Dead Sea - the world's lowest land point - right up to 650 m above sea level in the mountains of Mount Nebo and close to Ma'in Springs, both of which are popular tourist attractions.

All of the stages have now been completed and once the rainy season is over in March, they will be coated with Dead Sea water which is rich in salt to compact them further, providing perfect rally driving conditions for the world's best.

## Finns give Jordan WRC a glowing report

Jordan is on track to making a successful entry onto the FIA World Rally Championship (WRC) in 2008 after receiving a glowing report from visiting officials from the Neste Oil Rally Finland.

The three-man team spent four days in Jordan running the rule over the work carried out by the Jordanian team after being invited to the Kingdom by HRH Prince Feisal. And their resulting thumbs-up has given organisers a timely boost as they continue their preparations to welcome the world in four months time.

"The WRC family will like it because it is one of the most compact rallies in the world and the stages are excellent. The HQ will also be one of the best on the championship and once the service park is finalised, I am confident that Jordan will put on an event that is up there with the very best of them," said Jarmo Mahonen, General Manager of AKK Sports Ltd which organises the Finland event, widely recognised globally as one of the championship's finest.

## WEAK DOLLAR PROVIDES HUGE TOURIST BOOST FOR JORDAN RALLY

Jordan's first venture onto the FIA (WRC) calendar is set to benefit from an unlikely boost as the US dollar continues to slide against the world's major currencies.

With Jordan's official currency - the Dinar - pegged to the dollar, never has there been a better value-for-money time to visit the Kingdom with everything up to 20 per cent cheaper for the visitors compared to the same period last year.

The dollar is currently trading at record lows against the Euro and at around two dollars to the pound, and with a majority of rally fans hailing from Western Europe, Jordan has suddenly become a lot more attractive to the masses.

"The announcement of Petra as one of the new look Jordan Rally has been tailor made for the WRC family and the

views of rally fans were taken into consideration when re-designing the routes.

The Dead Sea stages run through areas made famous by biblical stories and termed as the Promised Land. Stages also run up to Mount Nebo and past the baptism site for Jesus Christ. Breathtaking Roman ruins from former garrison colonies are all within close vicinity of the capital Amman to provide rally fans with a cultural extravaganza while watching world class action.

Amman is also one of the most exciting and fastest growing cities in the Middle East, and is only 40 kms from the HQ. The city includes the sort of nightlife and tourist attractions expected of a major modern day capital.

## WRC PHOTOGRAPHER PUTS RALLY PREPARATIONS IN FOCUS

One of the world's leading rally photographers has praised the new-look Jordan Rally, claiming it will bring "a whole new dimension" to the FIA WRC.

Ralph Hardwick has been an FIA accredited photographer for the past 17 years and has covered more than 300 rounds of the WRC, and he believes something unique will be unveiled to the world this spring after spending several days in Jordan.

The British-based photographer visited the Kingdom to identify the best locations for the world's media to carry out their work and he has seen enough

to claim that Jordan will provide a special treat to the 300 media expected from over 50 countries.

"I have covered rallying all over the world but the locations and the backdrops for this event are breathtaking. The world's media is in for something special and Jordan is going to benefit from its scenery being broadcasted and showcased across the world," said Hardwick.

The Jordan Rally WRC will be the fifth round of the season with the global roadshow visiting Monte Carlo, Sweden, Mexico and Argentina before taking its bow in the region for what promises to be one of the biggest sporting or social events Jordan has ever hosted.

The Jordan Rally has already become a magnet for the region's media. Last year 230 media representing every single Arab country attended, underlining the event's status as a gateway to the region and to more than 200 million Arabs.

Over 100 media follow every single round of the WRC and many will be coming to Jordan for the first time in April. The media centre will be located in the spectacular King Hussein Convention Centre which will include a specialist TV room as well as a dedicated photographer area to meet the requirements of the FIA. Specialist media teams will be on the stages as well as in the Service Park to provide up to the second news while a Satellite Press Centre will be located within the Service Park for journalists to carry out their work.

