

Q & A with Dennis Kuipers

The FERM Power Tools World Rally Team will be making a debut during the Rally of Sweden in the World Rally Championship. The Ford Fiesta RS WRC of FERM Power Tools WRT will be driven by Dennis Kuipers. A great reason for a chat with the 25 year-old Dutchman.

You are the first Dutchman who is going to drive an extensive WRC season.

“Yes, isn’t that great? This is a unique opportunity. I love matching myself against the top. I think that there will be fewer technical differences due to the arrival of the new cars. Everyone begins on the same level, with the same chances. I think it comes down to the drivers.”

You drove nine rallies in a M-Sport Fiesta S2000 in 2010. How do you look back on this season?

“It was a great year. I learned a lot, which was in fact the objective: gaining as much driving experience as possible and learning from an experienced and professional team like M-Sport. What also helped me a lot are the tests before the races. You learn to adjust your car to the various roadbeds. This was new to me. In the Netherlands, almost all races are on similar roadbeds. There is much more distinction in the world championship.”

What was your highlight of the 2010 season?

“In Turkey, in my first rally with the Ford Fiesta S2000, I immediately came ninth and scored. Yes, this really is a peak from the perspective of achievements. I’m also very pleased about Bulgaria, 13th, and Spain, 11th, because these races were flawless and I was able to drive close to the edge. I really gave everything I had there.”

How do you prepare?

“I started working out fanatically at the gym, left nothing to chance. To prepare specifically for the Rally of Sweden, I tested the Fiesta S2000 with John Haugland in Norway. We drove on a frozen lake to get used to driving on ice and snow. Training with John is a great way of recalling the ins and outs of driving on these surfaces and perfecting it.”

What are you going to do differently in 2011 compared to last year?

“Hopefully, last season’s experience will help us. During this season, we gradually got more used to driving world championship rallies. The notes became increasingly better and the cooperation with Fred developed. We became a real team. Because of the good feeling and the automatism when driving, you can go into the notes more deeply. You can concentrate on what your time will be, go into it more deeply.”

Which rally are you most looking forward to?

“Mmm, let me think. I like Portugal and Spain. Well, Germany too in fact, just like Wales. Sweden in the snow is also very special. You know, all WRCs are great. I’m really looking forward to the new season and I’m really up for it.”

With which aims will you enter the 2011 WRC?

“I’m obviously going for it 100 per cent. I want to turn my experience into speed. We’ll see whether this will lead to points. I have experience, but you don’t know if this is enough until the season. We could go up a few spots in the league with a WRC car compared to this season. No matter what, I will do things my way, which is something I learned in equestrian sport. I listen to people I have a good feeling about and do my thing.”