



CITROËN

Citroën introduces the Citroën Junior Team

Citroën Sport is delighted to announce the launch of the Citroën Junior Team which will run as a 'Manufacturers 2' team in the 2009 FIA World Rally Championship. The programme will be handled by Citroën Sport Technologies and will feature several talented young drivers over the year. The full list of names, and the individual events they will each contest, have yet to be finalised, however.

"We are absolutely thrilled to be able to confirm the Citroën Junior Team as an M2 entry in the 2009 World Rally Championship," says Citroën Sport Director Olivier Quesnel. "As required by the regulations, the Citroën Junior Team will contest at least eight events in order to qualify for Manufacturers' points. Conrad Rautenbach, Evgeny Novikov and Sébastien Ogier will form the mainstay of the line-up, while Chris Atkinson is due to take part in the first round of the new year, the Rally Ireland, in a Citroën C4 WRC."

"It is no coincidence that we have chosen to employ the word 'Junior' in the team's official name," points out Citroën Sport Technologies Manager Benoît Nogier. "It is an M2 team which will predominantly run drivers who are currently learning the sport, and their average age will be 22. Our aims are to develop the commercial side which we began in 2008 and also enable our crews to benefit from our expertise. The programme will allow them to gain valuable extra experience which will put them in good stead for the next step of their career."

The set-up of the operation will be the same as that which ran Urmo Aava and Conrad Rautenbach in 2008 and will continue to feature the Citroën C4 WRC. On events, Citroën Sport Technologies will be based close to Citroën Sport's facilities and will once again be able to benefit from the latter's know-how. The Citroën Junior Team brings a further boost to the brand's commitment to the WRC and will be able to count on the expertise of the World Championship-winning squad throughout the year.

"Following the encouraging results he obtained in 2008, Conrad Rautenbach will again contest every round of the 2009 championship," specifies Benoît Nogier. "He will be joined on at least eight of those 12 rounds by the very young Russian driver Evgeny Novikov who will be competing in a WRC car for the first time and who has also shown that he has plenty of potential. The programme of the Junior World Champion Sébastien Ogier, who made a name for himself on the recent Wales Rally GB, currently includes six events. Last but not least, we will be joined in Ireland by Australia's Chris Atkinson who is already a familiar face in the sport. It is our belief that our association with Chris will not stop there."

The crews who have been confirmed to drive for the Citroën Junior Team are all very aware of the opportunity they have been given. They go into 2009 with great enthusiasm and extremely determined, yet perfectly conscious of the challenge that awaits them.

Communication CITROËN SPORT

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The Citroën Junior Team drivers

Conrad Rautenbach: born November 12, 1984, in Zimbabwe.

Rally debut: 2001 (Group N Toyota Corolla)

WRC debut: 2004, Monte Carlo (Ford Puma, retired)

WRC starts: 43.

Starts in a WRC car: 16.

Best result: 4th (Argentina, 2008, driving a Citroën C4 WRC).

Sébastien Ogier: born December 17, 1983, in Gap (France).

Rally debut: 2006 (Peugeot's Volant 206 single-make series). Member of the Rallye Jeunes FFSA team.

WRC debut: 2008, Mexico (Citroën C2 Super 1600, 8th overall, 1st J-WRC).

WRC starts: 8.

Starts in a WRC car: 1 (Wales, 2008, driving a C4 WRC, 26th overall).

2008 Junior World Champion driving a Citroën C2 Super 1600.

Best result: 8th (Mexico, 2008, driving a Citroën C2 Super 1600).

Evgeny Novikov: born September 19, 1990, in Moscow (Russia).

Rally debut: 2005 (as a co-driver sitting alongside his father).

Debut as a driver: 2006.

WRC debut: 2007, Wales Rally GB (Mitsubishi Lancer, retired).

WRC starts: 7.

Starts in a WRC car: 0.

2006 Russian Champion. At the age of 16, he led the opening leg of the 2007 Rally Russia before retiring with engine failure.

13th, 2008 Production World Rally Championship.

Best result: 11th (Japan, 2008, driving a Mitsubishi).

Chris Atkinson: born November 18, 1979, in Bega (Australia).

Rally debut: 2000 (Toyota Corolla).

WRC debut: 2004, New Zealand (Subaru Impreza, retired).

WRC starts: 66 (all in a Subaru Impreza).

Starts in a WRC car: 62.

Best result: 2nd (Mexico and Argentina, 2008, driving a Subaru Impreza).

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