

Death crash rally driver named

A 32-year-old rally driver who was killed when his car left the track has been named as David Williamson from the Penkridge area of Staffordshire.

He was pronounced dead at the scene after losing control of his Peugeot 205 GTi at the Wydean Rally on Saturday and suffering a severe head injury.

His co-driver was treated for shock but was not believed to be injured.

A rally spokesman said the emergency services reached the crash within four minutes but were unable to save him.

'Video appeal'

The course was said to be snowy and slushy after the heavy snowfall of Thursday and Friday

In a statement on the rally website the Forest of Dean Motor Club expressed its "deepest sympathy" to Mr Williamson's family at this very sad time.

Police investigating the accident are appealing for anyone with video footage or who may have witnessed the crash to contact them.

It is believed the car left the track and hit a tree during stage three of the rally in Serridge, in the Forest of Dean.

Wydean Rally event organisers have defended their decision to go-ahead with the rally despite snow being left on the track.

'Inherently dangerous'

Press officer Andrew Haill said there had been some snow on the course which was melting throughout the day.

He said the organisers had a grit and snow lorry on standby should they have been required and that the link roads within the Forest of Dean were needed for the safety crews and marshals.

Mr Haill said he believed there was nothing more they could have done to prevent Saturday's death.

"The safety regulations regarding rallies and the cars and the people that compete in them are very very stringent.

"It is just one of those things that motor sport is inherently dangerous and, thankfully very rarely, accidents do happen," he said.

The incident happened in the Forest area of the route. The rest of the drivers were diverted away from the area back to the Chepstow racecourse.

bbc.co.uk

BTRDA: Death overshadows Hunter win.

Hugh Hunter and Andy Marchbank claimed the spoils in the Wyedean Forest Rally, but the day was overshadowed by an accident which claimed the life of 32-year old David Williamson.



167 crews left the start of the event at Chepstow Racecourse on Saturday morning and it was on the first run through Serridge, in the Forest of Dean, that Williamson's Peugeot 205 left the road and hit a tree. The emergency services were on the scene within minutes but, tragically, there was nothing that they could do. The police sealed off the area and have begun an investigation into the incident.

The event organisers, Forest of Dean Motor Club, rerouted competitors away from the forest and back to the Racecourse, via Chepstow Park, for the finish where the formal prize giving was abandoned as a mark of respect.

Event sponsor Damian Cole took the runner-up spot in his Hyundai, with Tristan Pye and Andrew Roughead rounding off the top three in their Group N Subaru Impreza.

www.crash.net

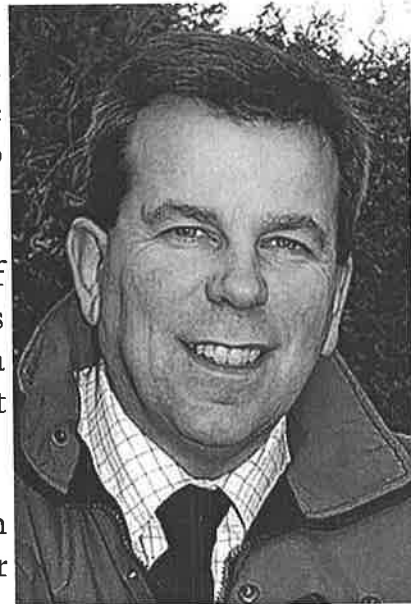
Elkins pulls out of death crash rally

By *Gareth Moorhouse*

WESTBURY rally driver Peter Elkins has revealed he pulled out of Saturday's controversial Wyedean Forest Rally because he thought the conditions were too dangerous.

The race was marred by the death of Staffordshire driver David Williamson, who was killed when his Peugeot 205 GTi smashed into a tree during stage three in Serridge, in the Forest of Dean.

The emergency services arrived at the crash within four minutes, but the 32-year-old driver was pronounced dead at the scene.



Peter Elkins

The stage was cancelled and the rest of the drivers were diverted away from the area back to the Chepstow racecourse.

Elkins, who bent the steering on his £70,000 Ford Escort WRC during stage two, chose not to drive on in the sleet and snow because he feared for his own safety.

Elkins, who was on his way home to Wiltshire when he heard about Williamson's death, described the race conditions as "atrocious."

He said: "These were conditions I had never come across before. The weather on the Wales side of the Severn Bridge was very severe.

"Everyone feels ever so sad. You never think something like this will happen but it's always in the back of your mind."

www.wiltshiretimes.co.uk

Police are appealing for witnesses following the death of a competitor at the Wyedean Rally in the Forest of Dean on Saturday.

The 32-year-old, who lived in Stafford, was pronounced dead at the scene after losing control of his Peugeot 205 GTI rally car and suffering a severe head injury.

His co-driver was shocked but was uninjured.

Police are investigating the collision and are appealing for witnesses who have not yet spoken to officers to come forward.

They are particularly keen to hear from anyone with video footage of the rally.

www.gloucestershire.police.uk

Co-driver Park dies in accident

Michael Park, co-driver for Markko Martin, has died after an accident on stage 15 of Wales Rally GB on Sunday.



Park, 39, was killed when Martin's Peugeot 307 crashed heavily into a tree on the passenger's side during the 17-mile Margam stage.

Estonian Martin escaped unhurt. The stage was halted and organisers then decided to cancel the final two stages.

Petter Solberg won the event after Sebastien Loeb declined to retain his world title in such circumstances.

A statement from the organisers said: "It is with deep regret that we confirm that Michael Park was fatally injured following an accident on special stage 15. "The next of kin has been informed. The driver of car number eight, Markko Martin, is uninjured."

No spectators were involved in the accident.

Park, nicknamed 'Beef', was a highly-experienced co-driver who had worked with former champions Richard Burns and Colin McRae.

Married with children, he first began rallying on the world championship circuit in 1994 as Mark Higgins' co-driver.

Park, from Newent in Gloucestershire, teamed up with Martin in 2000 when the Estonian was rallying a privately-entered Toyota.

They stayed together at Subaru and Ford before moving to Peugeot this year. The pair had won five world rallies together.

Peugeot issued a statement confirming that Martin had hit a tree on the right "Peugeot Automobiles and Peugeot Sport would like to express their feeling of extreme sadness and deep emotion to the family of Michael Park."

The cancellation of the remaining stages and withdrawal of Peugeot's Marcus Gronholm after Park's death would have meant Citroen's Loeb retaining his world title.

But the Frenchman declined to win the title in that manner and deliberately incurred a two minute penalty before heading back to Cardiff for the official finish.

That left him in third place with Subaru's Solberg declared the winner and Citroen's Francois Duval runner-up.

The rally finished at a sombre Millennium Stadium, where flags flew at half mast and a minute's silence was observed.

bbc.co.uk

The Rally of Great Britain was permanently stopped on Stage 15 of 17 on Sunday following the death of Michael Park - co-driver to Peugeot's Markko Martin. Park, 39, succumbed to injuries sustained in a high-speed impact with a tree on the 27.42km Margam Stage. The Estonian driver escaped unhurt.

www.astahost.com

PEUGEOT STATEMENT

- **A serious accident has left the Peugeot Sport team in mourning this Sunday morning during the last leg of the Wales Rally GB.**
- Markko Martin left the route shortly after the start of the second stage of the day and hit a tree on the right hand side of the car, mortally wounding his co-driver Michael Park.
- Peugeot Sport's Director, Jean-Pierre Nicolas, with the agreement of Mr. Frederic Saint-Geours, Managing Director of Peugeot, has decided, as a sign of mourning, to withdraw the car of Marcus Gronholm -- Timo Rautiainen.
- Peugeot Automobiles and Peugeot Sport would like to express their feeling of extreme sadness and deep emotion to the family of Michael Park, known affectionately as Beef.
- Jean-Pierre Nicolas: "We're still in shock and we still can't get over what happened ... We have to shake ourselves out of it to turn towards the future, but it's very hard. Markko has been to visit Michael Park's wife with Paul Turner, his personal manager. He also wanted to see the car and go back to the scene of the accident to try and understand what happened. He remembers nothing at all."
- **Daniel Carlsson will replace Markko Martin in the Rally Japan.**

MICHELIN STATEMENT

- **SOLBERG TAKES VICTORY ON BLACK DAY FOR RALLYING**
- Victory in the 2005 Wales Rally GB went to Petter Solberg, but in tragic circumstances following the death of Michael Park, co-driver to Markko Martin (Peugeot), in an accident on the final day.
- Sebastien Loeb (3rd, Citroen -Michelin), who was leading at the time of the accident, later deliberately checked in early at a time control to take a time penalty so as not to win the event and thereby not secure the 2005 world title at this sad moment.
- World Championship rallying is this evening in mourning and everyone at Michelin Competition would like to offer their sincerest condolences to Michael 'Beef' Park's family and many friends.

www.motorsm.com

Park fatally injured on Rally GB.

Michael Park, Markko Martin's co-driver, has been killed on the Wales Rally GB, following an accident in SS15.



Martin's Peugeot 307 WRC hit a tree on the passengers' side during the 27.42 kilometre Margam test.

The organisers have now confirmed that the 39-year-old suffered fatal injuries and the remaining two stages have been



"It is with deep regret that we confirm that Michael Park, co-driver in car number eight has been fatally injured following an accident in special stage 15," read a statement from the organisers. "Michael's family have been informed. The driver of car number eight, Markko Martin is uninjured.



"Margam 1 has been stopped and Margam 2 will not be run. On the advice of the FIA safety delegate SS16 and SS17, Resolfen 2 and Margam 2 will not run. Competitors will return for the finish in Cardiff, scheduled for 14:00. There will be no champagne celebrations at the finish and the post-event FIA press conference has been cancelled."

Police meanwhile have now sealed off the stage to investigate, as is standard procedure.

Park's death is the first in the WRC for 12 years.

Park began working with Martin in 2000 and this year they joined Peugeot, having previously worked together at Ford and Subaru. Park, married to Marie, leaves behind two children - William and Victoria.

Crash.net joins the rallying community in extending our deepest sympathy to the family and friends of Michael at this tragic time.