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Breen's French Fancy...

In my last instalment, I covered my Wales win and now after a second victory in a row, I sit on top of the SWRC standings with the final round in Spain to go. I said after GB that I had my little 'Guardian Angel' with me and following the result in France, it looks like he followed me across the English Channel.

We were back on tarmac in France but like every event in the world championship, it poses its own set of difficulties. The super special in Strasbourg kicked things off and my greatest fear on this type of stage is that it's so easy to hit a kerb or bollard, lose time, or worse, go out altogether. It turned out OK however; we went fastest and had a narrow overnight lead.

The rally began proper on Friday morning. We were in the Vosges Mountains and from the beginning it was easy to see there was something special about this event. The huge amount of spectators were visible from the first morning stage. We were in Loeb country and after he had announced a limited season next year, his loyal fans were out in force to help him bring home world crown number nine.

My lead became under threat

straightaway as Hayden (Paddon) started to charge. I responded and we tussled throughout the day. The 'Mulhouse' super special concluded day one and I finished just 2.2 seconds in arrears.

Saturday was the longest day and as it turned out, it became quite frustrating. A combination of losing some time and having two stages cancelled saw us 15 seconds behind by midday service.

On the rerun in the afternoon, the rear diff broke and we were effectively in front wheel drive for the remainder of the day. We dropped to third behind Yazeed (Al-Rajhi) but made it to service. The boys did a great job getting it sorted and I was ready to fight for second on the final day.

The Sunday morning was the last and shortest day but there was a big change in the weather. Overnight rain had made the

stages treacherous. There were stages with a sting in the tail. There was only a regroup between the runs...no service!

Yazeed had 14.9 seconds on and with the conditions as they were, my plan was to nip away, retake the position by the finish. To my surprise, by the end of the day I had beaten him by 20 seconds and was back up to second.

I said to myself, "Hayden is out of reach but 18 points is a good haul and we will still go to Spain in a good position."

Yazeed had other ideas and hit back on the next but by the regroup I had 5.7 seconds in hand again and all that was on our minds was to bring it home.

Conditions had improved somewhat as the final loop began. Then, near the end of the long stage, we passed Hayden. He had gone off the road on a very tight

