

M-Sport test Ford rally prototype

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MOTOR SPORT

Ford's M-Sport division from west Cumbria is on course to deliver its new Fiesta-based S2000 rally car - a machine that will also provide the basis for Ford's WRC entry in 2011, replacing the highly successful Focus WRC cars.

This morning M-Sport released two pictures of its first prototype undergoing testing on an airfield in Cumbria.

No precise technical details of the car have been released, but S2000 rules mean that the car will be four-wheel drive, but runs without the benefit of a turbocharger although a decent power output of around 270hp is anticipated.

M-Sport says a second prototype will be ready by the end of next month.

"I have been delighted with how the build of the new Fiesta S2000 rally car has progressed according to the schedule that we laid out at the start of this project," says M-Sport technical director Christian Loriaux.

"This is a totally new car and the entire design and engineering team here have been very focused on providing both a reliable and very competitive car for our customers.

"A brand new rally car involves thousands of parts and making sure that they are all designed, manufactured and delivered on time is an incredible achievement and takes a lot of team work. Our production and purchasing departments have done a great job in supporting the design team and ensuring the car was completed on time."

Matthew Wilson was at the wheel for the first run-out and M-Sport says he will be among a number of drivers who will be tasked with testing the vehicle during a condensed development programme scheduled for the rest of 2009.

The car is scheduled to be homologated in January 2010, and next year will campaign in the Super 2000 Cup - which will run as part of the WRC series - before entering the full WRC in 2011.