



Hankook MSA Northern Ireland Stage Rally Championship

(Image: John O'Neill) *The McKinstry steamroller express continued at last weekend's C. Bradley Motorsport Tour of the Sperrins Rally, as Banbridge rally preparation expert, Kenny McKinstry, secured his fourth Hankook MSA Northern Ireland Rally Championship victory on the trot!*

Navigated by Kenny Hull, McKinstry made it four wins from four events at the Magherafelt & District Motor Club event, which was Northern Ireland's first carbon neutral rally.



However, McKinstry didn't have it all his own way. In fact, it was only after stage five of the seven stage event that the Subaru Impreza WRC pilot moved to the head of the field.

During the early stages, it was Donagh Kelly and Kevin Flanagan who set the pace in their production category Mitsubishi Lancer Evo 9. On the opening 15-mile Slieve Gallion stage, Kelly was fastest by 5.5 seconds from the Skoda Fabia S2000 belonging to Jonny Greer and Dai Roberts, while McKinstry held third.

On stage two, it was Seamus Heron and Gerry McVeigh who set the pace in their Corolla WRC, while McKinstry was second fastest to promote him into second position. It looked as though he was about to pounce on leader Kelly, but a problem on stage three saw him lose eight seconds to the leaders.



Donagh Kelly continued to lead the event, but Seamus Heron was just five seconds adrift in second position. Jonny Greer and Dai Roberts had moved up to third, while Kenny McKinstry and Kenny Hull held fourth ahead of reigning champions, Stuart Biggerstaff and Anthony Nestor.

Seamus Heron hit trouble on stage four, dropping him well out of contention. Meanwhile, Kenny McKinstry went on a charge, promoting him to second overall. One stage later, he moved into the rally lead, and stayed there until crossing the finish ramp.

In the end, McKinstry and Hull won the rally by just 17 seconds from Donagh Kelly and Kevin Flanagan, who topped the Sunoco Fuels Group N tree. Johnny Greer and Dai Roberts brought their beautiful Skoda Fabia S2000 home in third position, with George Robinson and Tommy Speers fourth ahead of Stuart Biggerstaff and Anthony Nestor.

In the two-wheel-drive category, there was a titanic battle between Adrian Hetherington and Camillus Bradley. Less than one second separated the two crews going into the final stage, but it was Bradley who emerged victorious in the end.



Tour of the Sperrins winners Kenny McKinstry & Kenny Hull...

Bradley, with navigator Crawford Henderson, also sealed sixth overall in their Escort, 11.4 seconds ahead of Adrian Hetherington and Gary Nolan. Mark Donnelly and Martin Brady completed the top eight in their Mitsubishi Lancer.

With four rounds completed, attention now turns to round five, the Modern Tyre Service Mourne Rally. Based in Newry, the event is scheduled to take place on Saturday 4 June. More details can be found online at www.nirally.com.

ENDS.

C. Bradley Motorsport Tour of the Sperrins results (top 10)

Full results available from www.rallyscore.net

- 1 Kenny McKinstry/Kenny Hull (Impreza WRC) 1h02m18.0s
- 2 Donagh Kelly/Kevin Flanagan (Lancer Evo 9) +17.0s
- 3 Jonny Greer/Dai Roberts (Fabia S2000) +59.0s
- 4 George Robinson/Tommy Speers (Impreza WRC) +1m07.3s
- 5 Stuart Biggerstaff/Anthony Nestor (Impreza WRC) +1m32.6s
- 6 Camillus Bradley/Crawford Henderson (Escort Mk2) +1m44.0s
- 7 Adrian Hetherington/Gary Nolan (Escort Mk2) +1m55.4s
- 8 Mark Donnelly/Martin Brady (Lancer Evo) +2m05.3s
- 9 Neil McCance/Jonny Hart (Lancer Evo 9) +2m44.1s
- 10 Pat Kirk/Peter Ward (Lancer Evo 9) +3m05.3s

Hankook MSA N.I. Championship Standings (after round 4)

- 1 Kenny McKinstry 48pts
- 2 Donagh Kelly 35pts
- 3 George Robinson 31pts
- 4 Derek McGarrity 22pts
- 5 Connor McCloskey 20pts
- 6 John McGaffin 20pts
- 7 Neil McCance 16pts
- 8 Stuart Biggerstaff 16pts