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McGarrity Masters Mourne Rally

Round four of the 2014 McGrady Insurance MSA ANICC Northern Ireland Stage Rally Championship took place on the Modern Tyre Service Mourne Rally, on Saturday 7th June. Forty-seven cars entered the event, the last being a late entry from championship challenger Alan Carmichael, and they set off from Carnbane Industrial Estate in Newry for thirteen tarmac stages. The forest drives of Slieve Gullion and Camlough were to host the action, and heavy rain showers before the start meant that these strips of tarmac would be slippery underneath the forestation, but as usual the Newry & District Motor Club had worked hard to put on a great event.

There are some drivers who positively love the challenge of the narrow tarmac tracks, and one is definitely Davy Armstrong, a previous outright winner. With Paul Mulholland co-driving they powered their 2.5 MK2 Escort into the lead, a lead which they were to hold for the first seven stages. Derek McGarrity was driving his third different car in four rounds, an R4 specification Evo 10, but the change didn't seem to phase the championship leader, who was keeping Davy Armstrong in his sights. Behind Derek came a gaggle of rapid two wheel drive runners. William and Philip Armstrong made a great start in their Pinto Escort, ahead of Damian Toner's Sunbeam and Alastair Cochrane was also showing well in his MK2. Alan Carmichael has little experience of the Mourne stages, but had the Mini WRC in the top five times at this stage. Camillus Bradley retired on stage three whilst lying eighth and championship sponsor Fintan McGrady was enjoying the stages in ninth.

On stage eight, Wee Gullion 3, McGarrity swept into a lead he wasn't to lose, as Davy Armstrong dropped time and fell behind Alastair Cochrane after the following Big Gullion test. However three more fastest times pulled Armstrong ahead of the Cochrane by the finish to take the Carryduff Forklift two-wheel drive award. Alan Carmichael pulled up to fourth by the end of the day, with Alan Nesbitt fifth, followed by Fintan McGrady and class five winner Damian Toner. He was just three seconds ahead of class rival William Armstrong, with the MK2 Escort's of Shane Cullen and Chris Simms completing the top ten. Group N winner was Mark Massey in eleventh.

Stephen Mawhinney and Nigel Magee took the Montgomery Motorsport Historic prize in their 2.2 Lotus Sunbeam. There is now a summer break before round five of the McGrady Insurance MSA NI Rally Championship on the Ulster National Rally on August 15th-16th. It's looking ever more likely that Derek McGarrity is heading towards a record fifth Northern Ireland Championship title, but anything can happen over the two days of closed road tarmac on the Ulster.

To keep up to date please check out the NIRC Facebook page-<http://www.facebook.com/nirallying> and check out www.anicc.org.uk for the final points positions, series calendar etc.

McGrady Insurance NI Rally Championship- Rnd 4- Modern Tyre Service Mourne Rally Positions

1	Derek McGarrity/ James McKee	Mitsubishi Evo 10	47m10.7s
2	David Armstrong/ Paul Mulholland	Ford Escort MK2	+9.0s
3	Alastair Cochrane/ Patrick McCrudden	Ford Escort MK2	+12.2s
4	Alan Carmichael/Ivor Lamont	Mini WRC	+1m10.1s
5	Alan Nesbitt/ Quentin Park	Ford Escort MK2	+1m16.8s
6	Fintan McGrady/Brian Crawford	Ford Escort MK2	+1m31.7s
7	Damian Toner/Paddy McCague	Talbot Sunbeam	+1m31.8s
8	William Armstrong/Philip Armstrong	Ford Escort MK2	+1m34.8s
9	Shane Cullen/Russell Harold	Ford Escort MK2	+1m36.5s
10	Chris Simms/ Chris Hazley	Ford Escort MK2	+2m.00.8s



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