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Daniel Wins Round Six, McErlean Confirmed the Junior 1000 Rally Challenge Winner!

The sixth round of the 2015 McGrady Insurance ANICC Junior 1000 Rally Challenge Ireland, took place at Shackleton, near Ballykelly, for the Maiden City Motor Club's Dogleap Stages Rally. The Junior entry was a quality one, with current English series leader Charlie Barlow joining the eight starters in his Micra.

It was to be an incredibly competitive day, with victory going in Daniel Harper's favour, but any one of five drivers could have won the event, in what were extremely challenging conditions. Starting at number one was Kilrea's Josh McErlean, who is now confirmed the Junior 1000 Rally Challenge Ireland winner, after his round five victory at Bishopscourt. It's been an excellent season for the 15 year old Kilrea driver, with two wins at Kirkistown, one at St. Angelo and one at Bishopscourt in July. Next year the team plan to contest the series again, but with a few trips to England also a possibility. Shackleton started off well for Josh, joint second fastest, as Peter Bennett stole the march with a time three seconds faster than anyone. Michael McGarrity tied on time with Josh, with Daniel Harper and Philip White were a few seconds further back.

But 14 year old Peter Bennett, who is in contention for the Scottish series held onto a one second lead over McErlean on stage two. A spin on stage three and an over-shoot on four meant that fifth place was the end result, after another spirited attack from the Loughgall driver. That should have left McErlean with a nice lead, but on stage three, Daniel Harper got back into the groove after a long lay-off, scoring a very fast time and moved into joint second place with a very on form Michael McGarrity, both within two seconds of Josh. Philip White was putting in a fine display in his Micra, keeping in touch with the leaders and on stage four, where conditions were very wet he too put in a stunning fastest time, moving into third place. Second fastest was McGarrity who moved into a one second lead over Harper, as McErlean struggled to the end of the test with a broken gear linkage, dropping back to fourth.

Behind the leaders, Nottingham's Charlie Barlow was enjoying his first visit to Shackleton, taking time to get used to the venue, and his pace started to quicken up, as he over-took the similar Micra of Co. Armagh's Karl Johnston, these pair finishing sixth and seventh. Strabane teenager Jack Cairns would take eighth on the final results, very much enjoying his rally in his Peugeot 107.

The main emphasis was on the lead race between McGarrity, Harper and White, who was just four seconds off the lead going into the final two tests. On stage five Harper took the lead, as Michael McGarrity had a half spin. He had been on the pace all day however, and it was a great showing from the Glengormley driver to finish second. Third was undecided as a late charge from Josh McErlean, left him on equal time with Philip White, Josh taking third on the tie-break. It was a great result for Philip however, especially with the similarly mounted opposition behind him.

The winner was 14 year old Daniel Harper however in his Peugeot 107. It took the Anahilt teenager a while to settle in, as the last Junior event he contested in May lasted a matter of seconds, but once the initial steady runs were gone through, he was able to come onto the leading pace, and take his second win of the season- a real confidence boost. It was once again an epic race -second for second- every gear change counting, as the challenge proves its ferocious competitiveness. The series is also supported by the rally classified website www.rallysales.eu heads next for the final round next weekend on the Solway Coast in Scotland, where over thirty junior crews will go head to head as three challenges meet.

2015 McGrady Insurance Junior 1000 Rally Challenge Ireland- Rnd 6 Positions

1st	Daniel Harper/ Andrew Bushe	Peugeot 107	+36m 12s
2 nd	Michael McGarrity / Sean Topping	Citroën C1	+6s
3rd	Josh McErlean / Thomas McErlean	Peugeot 107	+9s
4th	Philip White / Martin McGarrity	Nissan Micra	+9s
5th	Peter Bennett / Arthur Kierans	Citroën C1	+38s
6th	Charlie Barlow/ Tom Hutchings	Nissan Micra	+1m16s
7 th	Karl Johnston/ John Henderson	Nissan Micra	+1m30s
8 th	Jack Cairns/ Brian Hoy	Peugeot 107	+3m37s

Driver Championship Points after Round 6

1	Josh McErlean	63
2	Michael McGarrity	48
3	Peter Bennett	46
4	Daniel Harper	39
5	Philip White	34
6	Karl Johnston	22
7	Jack Cairns	20
8	Bailie McClinton	16
9	Ruairi Bell	10
10	Sam Stewart	8

2015 McGrady Insurance Junior 1000 Rally Challenge Ireland Remaining Calendar

<u>Date</u>	<u>Venue</u>	<u>Organising Club</u>
9 th August	Solway (Scotland)	Solway Car Club
29 th December	Shackleton	Maiden City MC (Reserve)

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