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### **Bennett Maximises Micra on Round 4- 2017 McGrady Insurance Junior 1000 Rally Challenge Ireland**

The fourth round of the 2017 McGrady Insurance ANICC Junior 1000 Rally Challenge Ireland, in association with [www.rallysales.eu](http://www.rallysales.eu) took place at Bishops court for the Ballynahinch Motor Club's McGrady Insurance Stages event. Five Junior 1000 crews lined up for the six stage event, as the 14-17 year old rally stars of the future took to the expanses of the County Down race-circuit for nearly forty miles of special stage.

Making another return to the series, before he is old enough to compete in his R2 Skoda Fabia, was Loughgall's Peter Bennett. The 16 year old, who was runner up in last year's series had once again borrowed a Nissan Micra and proved to be the class of the field, but elected again not to score points. He was fastest on the first slippery stage, despite a half spin, ending the test only 0.9 of a second faster than 15 year old Sam Adams who was on his first ever visit to Bishops court. On stage two Bennett was eight seconds faster, but he ended it with a tattered Micra after over-cooking the braking into then chicane on the main straight and ploughing into the tyres. It was battered but not broken, as Peter and co-driver Mac Kierans powered to some seriously fast stage times in the afternoon to take a convincing win, proving the fact that one of the lower budget Nissan Micra's is still capable of winning the Junior 1000 rallies. *"I was pushing it everywhere just as hard as I could go"* said Peter *"It was good to be out competing again and it's more useful left hand drive practice too before the competition debut in the R2 car."*

Bishops court was a new experience for the other Junior drivers including championship leader Sam Adams. The 15 year old very much enjoyed the venue, and put in a good challenge during the day, the only real moment running wide on stage four at a hairpin and getting a tyre lodged underneath the Skoda Citigo for a time. Once again he improved his technique in the car, and took a maximum point's score, a good result before embarking on a trip to Angelsey in Wales next weekend for the first round of the UK series.

Peter Beaton and co-driver Kenny Foggo once again made their long trip from Nairn near Inverness in Scotland. 15 year old Peter in his Peugeot 107 lay third after stage one, but on stage two the Peugeot 107 was stranded as a gear linkage popped off. Co-driver Kenny Foggo used some expertise and leapt out and jammed the car in gear, enabling them to complete the stage dropping back to fourth. That allowed 14 year old Marcus McElwee in his Nissan Micra into third, but he too struck trouble on stage four, when the gearbox mount bolts failed and he dropped many minutes. The loan of some bolts from the Bennett team got them back out and the crew ended up fourth, behind Beaton in third who set some promising times on the final two tests.

The award for the unluckiest crew however went to Rory Byrne and James Byrne in their Volkswagen UP. It was very much down for the 16 year old Mayobridge driver after stage one however as he limped to the end of the stage with a damaged sump, which was unable to be repaired, and it was instant retirement. Rory will be hoping for better luck on round five which heads for St. Angelo airfield for the Enniskillen Motor Club's event on 4<sup>th</sup> May.

2017 McGrady Insurance Junior 1000 Rally Challenge Ireland- Rnd 4 Positions

1 <sup>st</sup> Peter Bennett / Macartan Kierans	Nissan Micra	42:38.4
2nd Sam Adams / Andrew Bushe	Škoda Citigo Sport	+1:43.1
3rd Peter Beaton / Kenny Foggo	Peugeot 107	+6:49.4
4th Marcus McElwee / John Henderson	Nissan Micra	+10:35.2
RET- Rory Byrne/ James Byrne		

Junior 1000 Driver Championship Points after Round 4

1 Sam Adams	48
2 Peter Beaton	30
3 Marcus McElwee	25
4 Rory Byrne	16

Registered co-driver points after Round 4

1 Andrew Bushe	48
2 Kenny Foggo	30
3 James Byrne	8

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