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Adams Ahead Again in Junior Challenge Finale Weekend!

Round's 6&7- 2017 McGrady Insurance ANICC Junior 1000 Rally Challenge Ireland

The final two rounds of the 2017 McGrady Insurance ANICC Junior 1000 Rally Challenge Ireland, in association with www.rallysales.eu took place at on Saturday at Shackleton, Ballykelly for the Maiden City Motor Club's Dogleap Stages event, and on Sunday for the Solway Coast Junior Rally in Scotland. Five Junior 1000 crews lined up for the Saturday action, with four of the 14-17 year old rally driver's heading for the Saturday evening ferry for the big adventure to Scotland for the Solway junior event, where twenty-four Junior 1000 crews lined up from the UK, Scottish and ANICC series.

Starting number one in Shackleton with six stages ahead of him was Peter Beaton, with new co-driver Dean Ross in their Peugeot 107 got off to a fine start, second fastest on stage one, despite a couple of sideways moments on patches of loose gravel. The long trip from Invernesshire wasn't to be rewarded with good luck however, as on stage two Peter turned out of the line on a square left corner to avoid a concrete post which had been pulled out, ran wide and contacted the only rock in the grass, bending a wishbone and bursting a tyre making it an uncomfortable crab out of the stage. With the wishbone changed at service, he went out to regain time on stage three, only for the gear linkage to fracture and the car limped out of the test stuck in gear. Fifth place was the end result, but six valuable challenge points for the sixteen year old.

Second on the road was Sam Adams from Armoyle who already had the championship sown up with his Skoda Citigo. It was to prove to be a dominant performance by the sixteen year old who started out of the blocks with a scorching time on stage one. Keeping up the pace all day, he took fastest times on each of the six stages to score a one minute seventeen second win. *"It was a really enjoyable day, and everything seemed to go right from the word go"* said the sixteen year old.

Fermanagh's Jordan Frazer who made an excellent debut on round five at St. Angelo, made his second outing in the Citroen C1 and put in a fine drive. With co-driver Chris Corry alongside, the sixteen year old made a cautious start on his first run around Shackleton but picked up the pace to record second fastest times on the last four stages, and take another second place finish. Jordan could be one to watch out for in the 2018 series as he learns more about rallying. In third was Rory Byrne Jnr with Paul Gallagher co-driving in the VW UP! They survived a backwards moment after a chicane, losing the rear bumper in the process, which was later returned to them by the marshals, and with third fastest times for most of the day to clinch third it was an event which saw a further improvement from the seventeen year old Mayobridge driver. Fourth was Marcus McElwee in his Nissan Micra with John Henderson co-driving. The fifteen year old from Magherafelt held on by just two seconds from the recovering Peter Beaton.

2017 McGrady Insurance Junior 1000 Rally Challenge Ireland- Rnd 6 Positions

1 J3 Sam Adams/Andrew Bushe	Škoda Citigo	28m 04s
2 J5 Jordan Frazier/Chris Corry	Citroën C1	+1m17s
3 J4 Rory Byrne/Paul Gallagher	VW Up	+2m16s
4 J2 Marcus McElwee/John Henderson	Nissan Micra	+2m57s
5 J1 Peter Beaton/Dean Ross	Peugeot 107	+2m59s

After the ferry crossing and a short drive to the Dundrennan Military Range for the Solway Coast Junior Rally, the four McGrady ANICC crews entered where to have mixed fortunes. For Marcus McElwee there was some bad luck. A minor off didn't present any major problem, but a broken gear-box did and he was forced into retirement, ending his hopes for a championship podium position. Peter Beaton was having a good day at Solway over the testing ranges and in the prevailing conditions, which started dry for the first four tests, and then a monsoon for the final loops! On the road section to the final stage over the gravel lanes in the venue, Peter ran wide and got the 107 beached, eventually going over time forcing him into retirement. Still the hard work during the season paid off, and a second place in the driver's championship is just reward for tremendous distances travelling to contest the rounds.

For Rory Byrne like many others the experience of the ranges was one to be-hold. It's the closest thing to closed road rallying with sections resembling those at home. Gravel, tarmac, concrete, crests, bumps, grids, gates it's all there on the challenging course, driven on route notes. *"It's my first time on a non-flat rally with the blind crests and it's quite an experience"* said Rory on his way to a fine second place amongst the N.I crews, with no major incidents. It was a new experience too for Sam Adams, but he started well in eighth overall after his first loop of the ranges. A charge on the second loop brought him up to fifth, and fourth was snatched on the final wet stage, giving Sam another McGrady Insurance Junior 1000 Rally Challenge Ireland round win, and first rookie driver home on the specialised Solway lanes. *"It was some event. I really enjoyed the second longer stage, and there was everything to deal with during the day in terms of surface and the afternoon downpours. It's been a great year and a great way to finish an enjoyable championship. Thanks to everyone who has helped during the season"* said Sam at the finish.

Once again new rally stars of the future have emerged from the Junior 1000 category for 14-17 year olds. Interested in finding out more contact co-ordinator Andrew Bushe- andrewbushe@btinternet.com for details of the 2018 series.

2017 McGrady Insurance Junior 1000 Rally Challenge Ireland- Rnd 7 Positions

1 st Sam Adams/ Andrew Bushe	Skoda Citigo
2 nd Rory Byrne/ Paul Gallagher	VW UP!
Rtd Marcus McElwee/ John Henderson	Nissan Micra
Rtd Peter Beaton/Dean Ross	Peugeot 107

Junior 1000 Driver Championship Final Points

1 Sam Adams	60
2 Peter Beaton	44
3 Rory Byrne	41
4 Marcus McElwee	38
5 Jordan Frazer	20

Registered co-driver final points

1 Andrew Bushe	60
2 Kenny Foggo	30
3 James Byrne	18

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