



## **Carryduff Forklift MSA ANICC Northern Ireland Stage Rally Championship - Update No 3 – after round 3- Donnelly Group Circuit of Ireland Rally on 6 & 7 April 2012**

**Date:** 10 April 2012

**Subject:** MSA ANICC NIRC Update No 3

**No. Pages:** 3

**From:** Championship Coordinator

**To:** MSA / ANICC / Stage Rally Specialist Committee

**Organising Club:** Ulster Automobile Club Ltd  
**Venue:** Armagh, Northern Ireland.  
**Starters:** International 35 (6 drivers & 7 co drivers registered for MSA NIRC started)  
National 71 (29 drivers & 24 co drivers registered for MSA NIRC started)  
**Finishers:** 75 (26 International and 49 National)

The **2012 Carryduff Forklift MSA ANICC Northern Ireland Stage Rally Championship** continued over the Easter weekend with the Donnelly Group Circuit of Ireland Rally on Friday 6th & Saturday 7th April.

The Ulster Automobile Club organised event attracted an excellent entry and 106 crews started the event. 35 International crews and 71 National crews. For the first time ever the COI was a round of the Intercontinental Rally Challenge and a high quality field had assembled for the start in the centre of Belfast. Rally HQ was in Armagh. There were two rallies within the event, an International Rally and a National Rally, and it was also a round of the Tarmac Championship as well as the NIRC. Crews entering either event who were registered for the NIRC or Tarmac Championship were eligible to score points.

Fifteen stages were planned for the two days with the spectator special in Titanic Quarter opening proceedings on Friday evening and then moving to the Dungannon and Armagh areas for two more stages. These two stages would be repeated in darkness before a late night return to Armagh for the overnight halt. Saturday was to begin with three stages in the Armagh area then service and the three stages repeated again. After another service the crews would head to Lisburn for two runs over the spectator stage there.



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It was then on to Banbridge for a five mile stage before heading back to the Armagh area for the long final stage at Redrock.

Current IRC Champion Andreas Mikkelsen driving his Skoda led the International field away followed by Jan Kopecky at two and Juha Hanninen at three. The National field was led away by Derek McGarrity in his Mini WRC with Eugene Donnelly at two in the Toyota Corolla WRC and Darren Gass at three in his Subaru WRC The top Group N contender was Gary Jennings in his Mitsubishi Evo who started at eight in the International field. The leading Group N driver in the National field was Trevor Ferguson in his Subaru N12. The top two wheel driver in the International field was Marty McCormick in his Citroen DS3 R3T. The top two wheel drive runner in the National field was Frank Kelly in his Mk 2 Escort.

The first stage saw Kopecky record the fastest time on the short spectator stage at Titanic Quarter but a mere five seconds covered the top dozen crews from both the International and National events.

At first service after three stages the leading crews in the International field were Mikkelsen followed 2.8 seconds later by Hanninen and then Kopecky who was 25.4 seconds behind Hanninen. The leading Group N driver was Jennings while the leading two wheel driver was McCormick.

In the National rally Gass had established a lead of 22 seconds over Donnelly with McGarrity a further 31.1 seconds back. The leading Group N car was Ferguson while the two wheel drive leader was Kelly.

The fifth stage was cancelled but there was a change of leader as Hanninen who had been fastest through stage four now led going into the final service before the overnight halt. The other positions in both events remained the same.

Day two began with three tough stages before a service break. At service Hanninen led by 8 seconds from Mikkelsen with Kopecky a further 55.8 seconds back. The leading Group N driver was Jennings while the leading two wheel driver was McCormick.

In the National event Gass had a lead of 1 minute 8.1 seconds from Donnelly who was 1 minute 9.3 seconds ahead of Kenny McKinstry who had moved ahead of McGarrity. The leading Group N driver was Ferguson while Hetherington was the leading two wheel driver.

The three stages were repeated and at service Hanninen's lead over Mikkelsen had been reduced to 2.3 seconds with Kopecky now 1 minute 25.5 seconds further back. The leading Group N driver was Jennings while the leading two wheel driver was McCormick.

In the National event Gass had a lead of 1 minute 22.4 seconds from Donnelly who was 2 minutes 31.9 seconds ahead of McGarrity. The leading Group N driver was Ferguson while Hetherington was the leading two wheel driver.

Two runs over the spectator special at Lisburn and then the short Banbridge stage led crews to the final stage, a third run over the long Redrock, before the finish in Armagh.

At the finish Hanninen had a winning margin of 44.2 seconds from Mikkelsen who had a coming together with a bale on the Lisburn stage and dropped some time. Third went to Kopecky who was 55.3 seconds further back. The leading Group N driver was Gary Jennings who finished eighth while the leading two wheel driver was Marty McCormick who finished eleventh overall.

In the National event Gass won by 1 minute 27.5 seconds from Donnelly who was 3 minutes 3.2 seconds ahead of McGarrity. Hetherington was the leading two wheel driver in fifth while the leading Group N driver was Ferguson who finished tenth.

Top 6 International finishers:

1. Juha Hanninen/Mikko Markkula – Skoda Fabia S2000 – 1:58:21.8
2. Andreas Mikkelsen/ Ola Floene - Skoda Fabia S2000 – 1:59:06.0
3. Jan Kopecky/Pavel Dresler - Skoda Fabia S2000 – 2:00:01.3
4. Matheiu Arzeno/Renoul Jamoul – Peugeot 207 S2000 – 2:02:23.4
5. Craig Breen/Gareth Roberts - Peugeot 207 S2000 – 2:03:15.6
6. Robert Barrable/Damien Connelly – Skoda Fabia S2000 – 2:03:36.3



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Top 6 National finishers:

1. Darren Gass/Enda Sherry – Subaru WRC – 2:01:59.5
2. Eugene Donnelly/ Paddy Toner – Toyota Corolla WRC – 2:03:27.0
3. Derek McGarrity/James McKee – Mini WRC – 2:06:30.2
4. Steve Perez/Paul Spooner – Ford Focus WRC – 2:09:12.9
5. Adrian Hetherington/Gary Nolan – Escort Mk2 – 2:12:19.8
6. Drew Stewart/David White – Escort Mk2 – 2:13:43.1

### **Championship Class leaders after Round 3:-**

Class 1 – Michael Nutt - Sean Topping  
Class 2 – Trevor Ferguson - David McElroy  
Class 3 – Glen Irwin – Rodney Wilson  
Class 4 – Simon Hemphill – Ciaran McMenamin  
Class 5 – Robert Erwin – Jimmy Graham  
Class 6 – Andrew Bustard – David Young  
Class 7 – Drew Stewart – David White  
Class 8 – Simon Woodside – Steven Dowds  
Class 9a – Ray Brammer – Lesley McGaffin  
Class 9b – Derek McGarrity – James McKee  
Class 10 – No competitors registered  
Class 11 – Andy Johnson - Jim McSherry

**Overall Leaders:** – Derek McGarrity – James McKee

**Sunoco MSA NI Group N Championship Leaders:-** Trevor Ferguson – David McElroy

**MSA NI 2wd Championship Leaders:-** Drew Stewart – David White

**MSA NI Junior Championship joint Leaders:-** Matthew Mason and Kyle Orr

**M E Crowe MSA NI Ladies Championship Leaders:-** Driver – none registered.  
Co-driver – Lesley McGaffin

**Montgomery Motorsport Historic Championship Leaders:-** Andy Johnson – Jim McSherry

**Ford Fiesta Sport Trophy Leaders:-** Richard Tannahill – Brian Crawford

The next round of the **MSA ANICC Northern Ireland Stage Rally Championship** will be the Tour of the Sperrins Rally on 5<sup>th</sup> May 2012.

**Ends**

David Gilmore  
Championship Coordinator



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Juha Hanninen and Mikko Markkula flying to a win on the Donnelly Group Circuit of Ireland Rally.  
 Photo by IRC Powered by Eurosports Events.

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