

McGarrity Tops the NI Rally Championship Runners on Circuit of Ireland

Round two of the 2014 McGrady Insurance MSA ANICC Northern Ireland Stage Rally Championship took place on the Discover NI Circuit of Ireland Rally, over two days on Good Friday and Easter Saturday. The entry was superb with the top Irish Tarmac Rally Championship crews also mixed into the Circuit National Rally action. This was an important factor as the points system rewards overall performances, so the NI runners would have to be in the top places to aid their championship position.

It was five times Circuit of Ireland winner, Derek McGarrity with co-driver James McKee who claimed the most points after finishing in a fine third place. The Mini WRC mounted driver had a good event, despite picking too hard a tyre on the early stages, and suffering from some clutch slip. Aided by Garry Jennings retirement on the final stage, it was a podium place for the multiple NI Champion, ahead of another former champion Kenny McKinstry. The Banbridge driver in his S14 WRC was on stages close to home on day two, but a puncture meant that he had no chance of catching McGarrity and he finished fourth.

With eighteen stages over the tough Co.Down and Antrim roads, it was not surprising that there were retirements. Desi Henry who was third at Bishopscourt in his S9 Impreza had worked his way up into sixth place before an overheating engine forced his retirement on day two. Alan Carmichael in his Mini WRC retired with rear diff failure. Johnny Leonard retired his Evo 6 on the first stage of day two after a rally fraught with problems, George Robinson broke the transmission on his Lancer, Kieron Graffin also retired his Evo 10 whilst well placed, and Lisburn's Wesley Patterson didn't get to drive around his home town as the transmission failed on day one. Misfortune also befell both Camillus Bradley, who was second in the two wheel drive race and series sponsor Fintan McGrady crashing their MK2 Escorts out of the event.

In the two wheel drive race, Declan Gallagher was first home, but Declan MacNaughton in his MK2 Escort took the Carryduff Forklift two wheel drive points for a fine sixth overall place, ahead of Alastair Cochrane and the MK1 Escort of Crumlin's Keith White. Frank Kelly recovered from day one dramas when he damaged his MK2 axle on the famous Hamilton's Folly jump to claim ninth. Tenth was the MK2 of Coalisland's Enda McNulty who is more usually seen in a Subaru in the forests. Just off the leader-board came a fine drive from Seaforde's Paul Killen to claim eleventh, and an even more impressive run to fourteenth overall was Stanley Orr's to take the Montgomery Motorsport Historic prize in his MK1 Escort.

Round three of the McGrady Insurance MSA NI Rally Championship is on the Tour of the Sperrins Rally on May 10th, and with now 170 registered drivers and co-driver's the series is in good health this season.

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 2- Circuit of Ireland Rally Positions

1	Declan Boyle/ Brian Boyle	Subaru Impreza WRC	1h 58m 47.5s
2	Donagh Kelly/ Kevin Flanagan	Ford Focus WRC	+40.1s
3	Derek McGarrity/ James McKee	Mini WRC	+3m11.4s
4	Kenny McKinstry/ Noel Orr	Subaru Impreza S14 WRC	+3m 27.4s
5	Declan Gallagher/ Ryan Moore	Toyota Starlet	+9m08.5s
6	Declan MacNaughton/ Sean Hayde	Ford Escort MK2	+10m 02.0s
7	Alastair Cochrane/Ian Kidd	Ford Escort MK2	+10m 08.6s
8	Keith White/Damien McCabe	Ford Escort MK1	+13m59.8s
9	Frank Kelly/ Russell Harold	Ford Escort MK2	+14m26.1s
10	Enda McNulty/ Paul Sheridan	Ford Escort MK2	+14m58.6s

Latest Points Table to be published on www.anicc.org.uk