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Champion Performance from Josh to Win Junior 1000 Round One!

The first round of the 2016 McGrady Insurance ANICC Junior 1000 Rally Challenge Ireland, took place at Kirkistown, for 500 Motor Club's New Year Stages event. Just four Junior 1000 crews lined up for the six stage event, with some new prospects still in preparation at this early stage in the year. In 2015 the challenge had record numbers, and made history by dominating the English/ Scottish/ Irish encounter on the Solway Coast in Scotland, but many of our Junior stars came of age at the season's end, and we wish them now the best of luck in senior rallying.

One of our current breed Daniel Harper won the prestigious Ginetta racing Scholarship over the winter, and he will be contesting the British Touring Car Championship support events. It is just a sign of the level of talent we have had in Junior 1000, and in the main event at Kirkistown, former Junior 1000 Challenge runner up Kyle White took and a fantastic third overall in his Citroen C2 R2 Max ahead of many four wheel drive super-cars. 2014 Champion William Creighton also performed well in his Peugeot 208 R2, and congratulations also to 2013 champion, Adam Bustard being awarded Ford Fiesta R2 drive at the recent Autosport show. These are just several examples of how the challenge has helped to nurture young talent.

Starting at number one in the Juniors on Saturday, was 2015 champion- Kilrea's Josh McErlean, with cousin Tommy once again in the co-driver's seat. The champions dominated the day, taking all six fastest times in the Peugeot 107, proving once again that they are names to look out for in the future. In second were Peter Bennett and Arthur Kierans, with some excellent times towards the end of the day. The reigning Scottish Champions had sold their winning Citroen C1, but when their new Skoda Citigo wasn't ready they had to go car hunting, hiring the ex Ben Crealey/Eoghan Bogue Micra for the day. It was a new experience for Loughgall teenager Peter, in this left hand drive machine, but despite a bit of bale bashing on stage four, they smiled all day on the way to an excellent second place and a useful haul of championship points.

Ruari Bell once again made the trip from London to contest a round of the series, and this time in a Peugeot 107. A spin on stage three was the only real drama as he learnt the car, and close the gaps to the leaders by the end of the day to claim third. Scottish visitors Peter Beaton and co-driver Kenny Foggo were fourth on their Nissan Micra. The welcome visitors are planning to contest the season and they very much enjoyed what was only Peter's third rally.

The series also supported by the rally classified website www.rallysales.eu heads for round two, back at Kirkistown on February 13th, where some new challengers may join the fray.

2016 McGrady Insurance Junior 1000 Rally Challenge Ireland- Rnd 1 Positions

1st	Josh McErlean / Thomas McErlean	Peugeot 107	33m04.3s
2nd	Peter Bennett / Arthur Kierans	Nissan Micra	+ 35.2 s
3 rd	Ruari Bell/ Jim Crozier	Peugeot 107	+ 2m01.9s
4 th	Peter Beaton/ Kenny Foggo	Nissan Micra	+ 6m48.3s

Driver Championship Points after Round 1

1 Josh McErlean	12
2 Peter Bennett	10
3 Ruairi Bell	8
4 Peter Beaton	7

Calendar 2016

<u>Date</u>	<u>Venue</u>	<u>Organising Club</u>
23 rd January	Kirkistown	500 MRCI
13 th February	Kirkistown	North Armagh MC
12 th March	Bishopscourt	Ballynahinch MC
2nd May	St. Angelo	Enniskillen MC
9 th July	Bishopscourt	Ballynahinch MC
6th August	Shackleton	Maiden City MC
13 th August	Solway (Scotland)	Solway Car Club
24 th September	Kirkistown	500 MRCI (Reserve)
12 th November	Bishopscourt	BADMC (Reserve)
30 th December	Shackleton	Maiden City MC (Reserve)

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Pictures thanks to Roy Dempster and Phi Stewart. Regulations and points for the series are available on www.anicc.org.uk