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McErlean Masters Junior 1000 Round Two!

The second round of the 2016 McGrady Insurance ANICC Junior 1000 Rally Challenge Ireland, in association with Rallysales.eu took place at Kirkistown, for North Armagh Motor Club's Pacenotes Stages event. Just four Junior 1000 crews lined up for the six stage event, in cold but generally dry conditions, as the 14-17 year rally stars of the future took to the mixed surfaced special stages.

Round one winner was 2015 champion- Josh McErlean, and the 16 year old with co-driver Tommy McErlean in his familiar Peugeot 107 was to assume the lead position again. Indeed the Kilrea teenager would set fastest time on each of the six stages, and was delighted as he crossed the finish line. "It was a very enjoyable day, great stages, and great fun out there. We kept on pushing and it went well" said Josh. Indeed the event was ideal preparation also for an assault on the English Junior 1000 series and with the first round next month the MacSport team are well warmed up.

Expected to be second were 15 year old Peter Bennett with co-driver Arthur Kierans, the reigning Scottish Champions debuting their sleek black Skoda Citigo. Teething problems had prevented the debut on round one and just before stage one the car went into safe mode, clocking up the team two stage maximums. However the Loughgall teenager started to learn his new car by stages three and four. "It's different to the C1" said Peter. "It definitely is going to need more time to set up, and to get used to the engine and gear-box, but it's good to get it here." Indeed fourth place was the result, but by the final stage, Peter was within four second of Josh's time, showing rapid improvements with the new machine.

16 year old Ruari Bell once again made the trip from London to contest a round of the series, with his Peugeot 107. He had the experienced Damien Connolly in the co-driver's seat, and once again closed the stage gaps to the flying Josh McErlean. Ruari's drama of the day came on stage two, breaking a drive-shaft and taking a maximum time, but he recovered to score his best Junior 1000 result in second place.

Scottish visitors 14 year old Peter Beaton and co-driver Kenny Foggo, came all the way from Inverness once again, as Peter and his family have made a commitment to contest the series. Another commitment they made the night before the rally was to purchase the ex-Michael McGarrity Citroen C1, with Peter having his first proper drive in the car on stage one. It was an improvement from his Nissan Micra, and the Scottish teenager once again loved the challenge of the Kirkistown circuit, bringing his times down significantly through-out the day.

The series heads for round three, which now will be at St.Angelo, Enniskillen on May Day-2nd May, for Enniskillen Motor Club's popular event.

2016 McGrady Insurance Junior 1000 Rally Challenge Ireland- Rnd 2 Positions

1st	Josh McErlean / Thomas McErlean	Peugeot 107	33m34.3s
2nd	Ruari Bell/ Damien Connolly	Peugeot 107	+ 3m30.2s
3 rd	Peter Beaton/ Kenny Foggo	Citroen C1	+ 4m42.4s
4 th	Peter Bennett / Arthur Kierans	Skoda Citigo	+ 5m 08.5s

Junior 1000 Driver Championship Points after Round 2

1	Josh McErlean	24
2	Ruari Bell	18
3	Peter Bennett	17
4	Peter Beaton	15

McGrady Insurance Junior 1000 Rally Challenge Ireland Calendar 2016

<u>Date</u>	<u>Venue</u>	<u>Organising Club</u>
23rd January	Kirkistown	500 MRCI
13th February	Kirkistown	North Armagh MC
12th 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 Phil Stewart- www.philpics.net

Regulations and points for the series are available on www.anicc.org.uk