

Fiesta Sport Trophy Ireland - McCarroll Takes First Fiesta Sport Win In Fermanagh...



Ford Fiesta Sport Trophy



McCARROLL TAKES FIRST FIESTA SPORT TROPHY IRELAND VICTORY IN FERMANAGH...



Michael McCarroll & Martin Connelly scored top **Fiesta Sport Trophy Ireland** points on the Fisher Engineering Lakeland Stages....Photo by Hankook.ie

Michael McCarroll took the **Fiesta Sport Trophy Ireland** honours on the Fisher Engineering Lakeland Stages Rally after his main rivals endured an action packed event.

Sunny conditions greeted the crews as they headed out to the first of the days tests on the shores of scenic Lough Erne but changeable conditions were forecast for later in the afternoon

2010 NI 2nd Group N Champion Jonny Leonard led the FST Ireland crews away from the Fisher Engineering HQ in Ballinamallard on Saturday morning. Jonny has endured a fraught season so far and a recent outing in a R2 Fiesta on the Ypres Rally, the prize for the 2010 Hankook Junior prize, had raised his hopes of better luck on his local event.

Fellow Fermanagh driver Stephen Baxter started just behind in his R2 version Fiesta, returning to the series after missing round 3 with FST Ireland leader Declan Leonard next up ahead of his brother Dara with Michael McCarroll rounding out the top 5 Fiesta crews.

The first loop of stages saw the local crews battle it out for top FST honours. Baxter held the initial advantage over stages one and two but as he struggled for grip through the third test, Jonny Leonard pounced to take the FST lead as crews arrived at the first service halt.

All was not going well with brothers Declan and Dara Leonard. Dara's Fiesta ST suffered a fuel leak on the way out to the first stage and the resultant small fire damaged the wiring loom and ended their event before it really got going. Declan at least got as far as stage one but lost 1 minute to the leaders with transmission woes and retired on the next road section.

With the cars fully fettled after first service, the crews made their way out for a repeat of the morning's stages. Jonny Leonard held an 8 second advantage over Baxter and was determined to stretch the gap to his rival. However, driveshaft failure just 3.5 miles into stage four blunted the attack and with two further stages between them and the next service they were unable to continue. This left Baxter out in front ahead of McCarroll and both elected to keep a steady pace to ensure a points finish.

On the third and final loop, the weather broke, with torrential rain making the remaining stages even more of a challenge. Baxter was one of the crews who were caught out by the conditions, hitting a rock on the final test and bending a steering arm which put him off the road.

Michael McCarroll had stuck to his game plan, drove his own rally and now he was reaping the benefits of Baxter's error to take his first Fiesta Sport Trophy Ireland victory of the season.

Driver Comments:

Michael McCarroll – "Saturday was my first time at the Lakeland stages. I don't think I even spectated before! My plan for the rally was to drive at a sensible pace and go a bit harder on the second loop but I still managed to give myself a scare at the notorious bridge on the first stage!"

"At service I learnt that two Fiestas had retired on the loop so I decided to up the pace a bit but not go mad and go off. The last loop was very rough and the weather was deteriorating so just keeping the car on the road was a challenge! This wasn't helped by having to change the wheel just before the seventh stage. To my surprise with only a few corners to go on the last stage the final Fiesta was off the road."

Jonny Leonard – "We were very cautious on the opening stages (too cautious to be honest) took a while to get back in to the swing of the gravel. SS2 & SS3 were better and I started to get into the swing of things."

"In service we decided to up the pace and have bit of a push on SS4 as we were leading FST but it unfortunately all came to an end about 3.5 miles into the stage with driveshaft trouble. We had two more stages before service so we could not continue."

Stephen Baxter – "All was going well although we struggled for grip at times. We were leading the 1600 class by 20secs until we hit a massive rock on the last stage which bent the steering rod and put us off the road and we couldn't get back on so went OTL. Can't wait until the next round, the Bushwhacker."

Lakeland Stages Results – Fiesta Sporting Trophy Ireland Round 5:

- Michael McCarroll/Martin Connelly – Fiesta ST – 50:33.0**
- Dara Leonard/Denvir Rafferty – Fiesta ST – Retired before SS1 - Engine fire**
- Declan Leonard/Dermot McCafferty – Fiesta ST – Retired SS2 - Mechanical**
- Jonny Leonard/Jackie Elliot – Fiesta ST – Retired SS4 - Mechanical**
- Stephen Baxter/Johnny Baird - Fiesta R2 - Retired SS9 - Accident**

Fiesta Sport Trophy Ireland positions after Round 5:

Driver		Rnd1	Rnd2	Rnd3	Rnd4	Rnd5	Rnd6	Rnd7	Rnd8	Total
Declan Leonard	FiestaST	10	8	12		0				30
Stephen Baxter	Fiesta R2	12	10	~		0				22
Dara Leonard	Fiesta ST	9	12	0		0				21
Michael McCarroll	Fiesta ST	~	8	0		12				20
Jonny Leonard	Fiesta ST	0	0	0		0				0
Philip Ewart	Fiesta ST	0	0	~		~				0

Co Driver		Rnd1	Rnd2	Rnd3	Rnd4	Rnd5	Rnd6	Rnd7	Rnd8	Total
Dermot McCafferty		10	8	12		0				30
Denvir Rafferty		12	10	~		0				22
Matthew McKenna		~	12	~		~				12
Paddy Robinson		9	~	~		~				9
Connor O'Loan		~	8	0		~				8
Jackie Elliot		0	0	0		0				0
Scott McMahon		0	0	~		~				0

The next round of the **Fiesta Sporting Trophy Ireland** will be the Bushwhacker Rally on Saturday 24th August.

- 6th August - **Dogleap Rally** (Gravel) - cancelled
- 24th September - **Bushwhacker Rally** (Gravel)
- 22nd October - **Down Rally** (Gravel)
- 5th November - **Glens of Antrim** (Gravel)



How to Register...

To be eligible for the **Fiesta Sport Trophy Ireland** competitors have to register for the Hankook NIRC and sign up to the Regulations of FST Ireland and display the required FST decals.

NIRC Registration Forms are available to download from www.nirally.com

FST Ireland documentation will be available from the NIRC/FST co ordinator at each event.

Bonus's and Prizes...

On event Vouchers...

During the season, registered **Fiesta SportTrophy Ireland** competitors will receive **M-Sport Parts Vouchers** based on the final overall results on each of the eight rounds up to the following:

- First - £150**
- Second - £100**
- Third - £50**

End of Season Prize...

At the end of the season, the overall winner of the **Fiesta SportTrophy Ireland** will receive a test day in a **Fiesta WRC** with instruction from an M-Sport nominated Team Driver.

In addition, the winner will also be given an invitation to the **Fiesta Sport Trophy International Shootout** with the winners from other FST countries for the chance to experience life with Ford's FIA WRC team, M-Sport.



Background to the Fiesta Sport Trophy International...

With the Fiesta able to compete throughout the world in near-identical pan-European championship events, and in the **Fiesta SportTrophy International** without having to change specification, the FST provides a direct stepping stone towards the **World Rally Championship**.

2011 will also see the start of the **FIA WRC Academy**, a new six round series using Ford Fiesta R2 Rally cars supplied by M-Sport. The series will act as a step forward for young drivers to work their way up the rungs into world rallying. The series is hoping to attract drivers from across the world and, with an arrive and drive set up, it is likely to attract a diverse crowd. With the 'rungs' falling into place on Ford's 'Ladder of Opportunity', there can be no better place to start rallying than the **Fiesta SportTrophy**.

For further details on the FST, contact the NIRC/FST co ordinator by email at: paul.biggerstaff@tiscali.co.uk

This email is for information only and carries no regulatory power.