

McGarrity Takes Mighty Win in Mini at Bishopscourt!

Round one of the 2014 McGrady Insurance MSA ANICC Northern Ireland Stage Rally Championship took place today at Bishopscourt with a superb entry, and last year's Northern Ireland Rally Champion, Derek McGarrity took victory in his newly acquired Mini WRC. It wasn't all plain sailing for the Belfast driver, as on stage one the red Mini spluttered around the test. *"The car had over-heated on the line and went into safe mode"* commented Derek *"It wasn't such a good start, but it got better. I really enjoyed the stages, and indeed the car. The braking and chassis were superb, and I love to drive anything around here anyway, it's a great venue."*

Luck was in for the Belfast driver, as the times for stage one were cancelled after a timing error, and it was fortune also for fellow Mini WRC driver Derek McGeehan who had a problem at the stage split junction. A pattern began to emerge on stage two with McGarrity stealing over five seconds on second placed Kevin Barrett in his S14 Subaru. Kevin was to have one of his best runs on a Northern Ireland Championship rally, and would hold onto second place throughout the fourteen stages with co-driver Lesley McGaffin on the pace-notes. Ballymoney's Alan Carmichael took an early third in another Mini WRC, but his team-mate Derek McGeehan would over-take him during the day to finish fourth. Portglenone's Desi Henry in his S9 Subaru WRC soon moved into third place, despite a dodgy third gear. *"It wasn't engaging properly going from 2nd to 3rd, so we had to be careful with that change today and make sure to use the clutch"* said Desi. Despite those delays Desi would claim third at the finish, with his co-driver Liam Moynihan making the trip up from Cork for the day.

There was a great race for fifth decided by just one second between Alan Carmichael and Emma McKinstry. Despite a big charge from the Banbridge lass in her S14 Subaru, it was decided in favour of the Mini man Carmichael. In sixth was Martin Cairns in the third S14 Impreza WRC, just seven seconds ahead of former NI Rally Champion George Robinson in his Group A Mitsubishi. Ninth overall and winner of the Carryduff Forklift two wheel drive award for the day was Bushmills farmer Alastair Cochrane in his MK2 Escort. English visitor Ray Brammer completed the top ten in his Subaru S8 WRC, ahead of Group N winner Pat O'Connell from Tipperary in his Mitsubishi Evo 9. Just behind Pat was a fine drive by seventeen year old Kyle White in his Citroen C2 R2 Max. Last year's Junior 1000 Rally Challenge runner up was second two wheel drive finisher and first in the 1600cc class.

For Derek McGarrity however it was a superb start to his Northern Ireland Championship campaign, with the next round on the closed roads of the Circuit of Ireland at Easter. *"I'm looking forward the Circuit and I think we can develop this car more before that event, so I am really quite excited about that. The NI Championship too will be interesting with all the tarmac this season and for sure today was a good start"* commented Derek.

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 1- Bishopscourt Rally Positions

1	Derek McGarrity/ James McKee	Mini WRC	37m13.9s
2	Kevin Barrett/Lesley McGaffin	Subaru Impreza S14	+25.0s
3	Desi Henry/Liam Moynihan	Subaru Impreza S9	+43.6s
4	Derek McGeehan/Laurie Smyth	Mini WRC	+55.4s
5	Alan Carmichael/Ivor Lamont	Mini WRC	+1m17.4s
6	Emma McKinstry/Kenny Hull	Subaru Impreza S14	+1m 18.4s
7	Martin Cairns/ Clare Gamble	Subaru Impreza S14	+1m 59.4s
8	George Robinson/Tommy Speers	Mitsubishi Evo 9	+2m07s
9	Alastair Cochrane/Alexander Cochrane	Ford Escort MK2	+2m14.1s
10	Ray Brammer/Gary McElhinney	Subaru Impreza S8	+2m15.4s