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Derek Wins the Race of the Champions!

Round One-2015 MSA ANICC McGrady Insurance Northern Ireland Rally Championship!

The 2015 MSA ANICC McGrady Insurance MSA Northern Ireland Rally Championship started in fine style on the North Armagh Motor Club's Eurocables Stages Rally at Kirkistown. The six stage mixed surface event, attracted a very healthy eight-six entries, and ran slickly in dry weather.

The race at the front unfolded into a mighty battle of the Northern Ireland Champions Derek McGarrity in his Mini WRC, who has five titles and Kenny McKinstry in an S14 Impreza WRC, who has three. It was Derek who took the lead on stage one, but Kenny replied with a storming run on stage two to hold the lead. It was a frenetic race, and by stage four Derek was now the leader by 0.7 of a second. The final two stages in reverse direction and the Mini surged in front to win by six seconds as McGarrity was on the absolute limit. It was a reversal of places between the two drivers from the New Year Stages event at Kirkistown three weeks ago. *"I had to work so hard today, not to make one mistake"* said Derek. *"I knew that one fluffed gear change and Kenny would be taking a chunk of time off me, as we had to make up for the power difference. The Mini however was handling and braking very well, and it was a great days racing."*

Behind them Kevin Barrett in his S14 took a fine third place, however thirty-nine seconds behind the winning time. In fourth was Ballymoney's Alan Carmichael in another Mini WRC heading a gaggle of WRC Subaru's. Paddy McVeigh took fifth in his newly acquired S12B version, from Strabane's Martin Cairns who adapting to his S14 on tarmac in sixth. In seventh another fine run for Emma McKinstry ahead of English driver Ray Brammer in a similar Subaru. Notable retirements included 2010 NI Champion Stuart Biggerstaff who retired from fifth after stage three, and former Billy Coleman Award winner Stephen Wright in his new R5 Fiesta who was seventh before retirement.

The two wheel drive race was won by Crumlin's Keith White in his 2.5 MK1 Escort in a fabulous ninth place, after climbing back from a stage one delay, with Wesley Patterson in his 2 litre Mk2 Escort nine seconds behind in tenth. However one of the drives of the day had to come from rally veteran Dessie McCartney. The 1975 Galway International and 1980 Ulster Rally winner, now into his 70's led the two wheel drive race after stage one in his Darran, before a spin on the loose on the next test. However he fought back to twelfth overall and with a seventh fastest overall stage time on stage four, proving there's plenty of life in the old dog yet!

In Group N Kieron Graffin took a convincing win in his Evo 10, and eleventh overall, with Brian McFall in his Evo 9 just over twenty seconds behind. Other notable drives came from former Junior 1000 driver Kyle White, the class four winner and eighteenth overall in his Citroen C2, despite a lurid 180 degree spin! Class five winner was Ian Green with wife Amanda in the co-driver's seat in his Peugeot 205, Michael Nutt took the small Group N- class one, and Conor and Alexander Cochrane the class three honours.

Top Historic was Drew Wylie in twenty seventh in his FIA specification Escort RS1800, with Stephen Mawhinney's Lotus Sunbeam winning the non FIA class in thirty-sixth. That was just one place ahead of last year's Junior 1000 Ireland champion William Creighton, the seventeen year old on his first outing in a DGM Sport R2 Fiesta.

McGrady Insurance MSA ANICC Northern Ireland Rally Championship 2015-Round One

1 -	Derek McGarrity / James McKee	Mini Countryman WRC	26:15.1 (+0:00.0)
2 nd	Kenny McKinstry / Noel Orr	Subaru Impreza S14 WRC	26:21.1 (+0:06.0)
3 rd	Kevin Barrett / Claire Gamble	Subaru Impreza S14 WRC	26:54.2 (+0:39.1)
4 th	Alan Carmichael / Ivor Lamont	Mini Countryman WRC	27:03.7 (+0:48.6)
5 th	Paddy McVeigh / Gary McElhinney	Subaru Impreza S12B	27:19.1 (+1:04.0)
6 th	Martin Cairns / Brian Hoy	Subaru Impreza S14 WRC	27:25.0 (+1:09.9)
7 th	Emma McKinstry / Kenny Hull	Subaru Impreza S8	27:41.1 (+1:26.0)
8 th	Ray Brammer / Mo Downey	Subaru Impreza WRC	27:51.2 (+1:36.1)
9 th	Keith White / Damian McCann	Ford Escort MkI	27:56.7 (+1:41.6)
10 th	Wesley Patterson / Johnny Baird	Ford Escort RS	28:06.0 (+1:50.9)

Provisional drivers points after round one:

1 st	Derek McGarrity	12
2 nd	Kenny McKinstry	10
3 rd	Alan Carmichael	8
4 th	Paddy McVeigh	7
5 th	Emma McKinstry	5

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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 series regulations and latest points. Full results on www.rallyscore.net

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