

BARBADOS RECORD BREAKERS



In an update on Sol Rally Barbados 2011, Mark Wheeler looks forward to a record WRC entry for the Caribbean's biggest annual motor sport international...

With entries continuing to flow in – the total was just 20 short of the new target of 100 by mid-March – Sol Rally Barbados 2011 (June 4/5) looks set to break a few records.

Significant among them, organisers believe, will be the biggest entry yet of World Rally Cars, which will almost certainly break into double figures for the first time anywhere in the Caribbean.

Seven are already listed in the Barbados Rally Club's (BRC) Modified 8-WRC grouping and a

number of the usual suspects are still missing, with entries closing early May.

From the 'home team' confirmed entries include 11-time winner Roger Skeete (Subaru Impreza WRC S12), Roger Hill (Toyota Corolla WRC), Dean Serrao (Impreza S9) and Sean Gill in the Suzuki SX4 WRC, in which he finished an impressive second overall on its debut in the loose-surface Rally Jamaica last December.

Since former UK National Champion Paul Bird submitted the entry of his Ford Focus

WRC08 (just in time for the March edition of Pacenotes), two first-time Imprezas have been added to the list from the UK.

Neil Barnard, the Barbados Rally Club's PRO, said: "Looking at our regulars and counting in the newcomers, we could have as many as 12 in the group...that would be a record for the Caribbean. But it's not just the sharp end that matters. We're getting a fantastic entry right through the field, with some spectacular two-wheel-drive cars to mix things up a bit."

England's Rob Swann and Welsh co-driver Darren Garrod, who made Caribbean motor sport history in 2010 by becoming the first crew to win Group N in both Rally Barbados and Rally Jamaica in the same year, have changed up a gear, with a Melvyn Evans Motorsport-run Impreza S12 for the driver's second outing in a World Car.

"I'm not too good at sticking my head above the parapet," Swann said, "but I'll stick my neck out. Yes, winning Sol Rally Barbados is the target. I realise this isn't going to be easy, but I've learned a lot about the stages over the past three years. What's important will be seat time."

The second Impreza entry arises from a major promotion jointly organised by the BRC and the London office of the Barbados Tourism

Authority (BTA) during Rallye Sunseeker, round one of the Dulux Trade MSA British Rally Championship. The winning crew of Rallye Sunseeker National won an all-expenses paid trip to Sol RB11, including free entry and shipping, return flights on Virgin Atlantic, accommodation and rental car.

Three-time Sunseeker winner, Roger Duckworth, drove off with the prize in his Impreza, which dates from 2000, and confirmed within a week that he would definitely travel to Barbados with co-driver Aled Davies.

They received their award during the Richard Burns Foundation Charity Dinner and Auction on the Saturday evening of Rallye Sunseeker from Petra Roach, BTA vice-

president, marketing & sales UK, and Aymara Cummins, representing the BRC and the Sol Group.

One World Rally Car that won't be making the trip, however, is the Focus WRC 07 of former ANCRO Champion Steve Perez. He has been a regular visitor to the event in recent years, but this year, he will be there as one of the more interesting two-wheel-drive entries.

Perez has opted to campaign his Porsche 911 RSR, in which former World Champion, Bjorn Waldegard, tackled the event in 2008. Perez is among nine entries so far received for the Historic classes.

Entries are still open and the competition is really hotting up for the 2011 Sol Rally Barbados!

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