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Ready to rally – Rob and Ross Weir. Pictures courtesy of Jones/CMWI.NET



WEIR TEAM UP FOR SOL RALLY BARBADOS 2012

Entries for Sol Rally Barbados 2012, the Caribbean's biggest annual international motor sport, are flowing into the event's official web site faster than last year . . . and the organising Barbados Rally Club (BRC) reports that half of the International entries received are newcomers.

Sol Rally Barbados Chairman Barry Gale says: "I realise it is early days, but I am very encouraged by the entries received so far. We have reached one-fifth of the entry cap almost two months earlier than last year and, while there are already familiar names on the international list, four crews so far are new to the event."

Those include father and son Rob and Ross Weir from Chepstow in Monmouthshire, south Wales; Rob, who heard about Sol RB12 on a previous visit to the island, is returning to rallying after a long break, having enjoyed 10 years in the sport from 1975, as driver or co-driver in a variety of Opels, Ascona, Kadett and Manta.

The crew debuted their brand new 300bhp Weir Laundry Equipment/HJ Weir Engineering Subaru Impreza last Sunday (October 30) in the WLE Rally Time Trial, organised by the Forest of Dean Motor Club and sponsored by their family business, which sells refurbished industrial laundry machines to cruise lines, hotels and hospitals globally. The event was staged at the popular Sweet Lamb complex

in mid-Wales, where fast gravel tracks blend some technical twisty bits to offer a challenging venue.

This was Rob's first event for 26 years, while Ross was making his competition debut as co-driver; they finished 25th overall and seventh in class. Afterwards, Rob Weir said: "I was really pleased to finish, that was the plan. It was a superb event, well organised, with great stages."

"Its nice to be back . . . more match practice before the Wyedean, now."

Ross added: "The car ran faultlessly all day, we both really enjoyed the event. The Forest of Dean Motor Club is our local club, this being one of the reasons we decided to sponsor the event, we feel that our contribution to the event was a way of putting something back into the sport."

"Dad struggled to find the pace he wanted, but this was his first event in 26 years, and the first time out in the Impreza! It will take some time to get back to the pace he was used to, also he used to rally rear-wheel-drive Opels and, of course, the technique required to drive the Impreza is totally different. Overall, we were happy with the day, seeing dad's times getting faster on every stage . . . and it was a great chance for us to work as driver and co-driver for the first time on an event."

The Weirs are now planning a two-day test at Walters

Arena, the popular spectator stage that features in Wales Rally GB, Britain's round of the World Rally Championship; they aim to arrange this before the end of the year, after which the car will be fully-liveried in time for the Team GMF Motor Factors Wyedean Forest Rally in February 2012.

The Impreza was built by Rob Smith Rallying Ltd in Towcester, close to Silverstone, venue for the British Grand Prix - the firm's web site includes a page following the car's build, shakedown and first event.

Smith himself is a successful competitor, having rallied a range of Imprezas, winning the BTRDA Production Cup in 2005, then the ANCR0 Production Cup and the Prodrive Subaru Trophy in 2006.

Subject to final ratification by the island's governing body, the Barbados Motoring Federation (BMF), Sol RB12 will take place on Saturday and Sunday, June 9/10, with Scrutineering and the Shell V-Power King of the Hill the previous weekend, June 2/3.

Sol Rally Barbados and Shell V-Power King of the Hill are organised by the Barbados Rally Club, which celebrated its 50th Anniversary in 2007; Sol RB12 is the 23rd running of the Club's annual International All-Stage Rally and marks the fifth year of title sponsorship by the Sol Group, the Caribbean's largest independent oil company.

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