

Sol Rally Barbados' Record Breaking Form

With entries for Sol Rally Barbados 2012 easing past 110 midway through March, pundits are predicting the hottest competition in the 23-year-history of the Barbados Rally Club's (BRC) premier event...and two lucky marshals from this year's Donnelly Group Circuit of Ireland will be there to witness the drama unfold!

Win A Trip!!!

Any marshal who signs on for this year's Circuit of Ireland Rally will automatically be entered into a draw to win a trip to this year's Sol Rally Barbados. Two names will be pulled from the hat after the event, giving two lucky marshals the opportunity to see how it's done on the other side of the Atlantic!

To be in with a chance to win, all you have to do is sign on as a marshal at the Circuit of Ireland Rally, which takes place over 6-7 April 2012. Dedicate some of your time to this year's event, and two months later you could be whisked away to a sunny Caribbean island!

The competition is open to all marshals aged 17 and over. To register as a marshal for this year's Circuit, log on to www.circuitofireland.net, click the 'marshals' tab and download the registration form.

If you're not in, you can't win...and you can't win if you don't marshal. So play a vital role at this Easter's Circuit of Ireland Rally to be in with a chance of winning the best prize in UK and Irish rallying!



Ten cars are confirmed for the WRC class – and there's at least one more announcement to come – with healthy line-ups for Group A and Group N pushing the 4WD total towards 30, against the previous best of 25 (in 2008 and 2009).

Other likely records include the highest number of International crews – the notional cap of 30 has been passed for the first time – and the largest number of overseas participants, currently 79, driver or co-driver. Crews are travelling from as far afield as Dubai and Kenya, and five of the current total of 10 first-time crews are from Ireland (details in our May issue).

As ever, the man to chase is Roger Skeete, whose back-to-back victories for the past two years in his Subaru Impreza WRC S12 brought to 12 his total since the event first ran in 1990.

He will be chased hard by fellow locals Paul Bourne (Ford Focus WRC07) and Sean Gill (Suzuki SW4 WRC), who shared the honours in the Barbados season-opener, a double-header tarmac sprint. Bourne has won before (2003 and 2007), while Gill yearns to steer a car to victory, after winning as co-driver to Kenny McKinstry in 1996.

For the past two years, the top four in Sol RB have been the same, with Skeete and Bourne heading home the best of the overseas competition, Britain's Paul Bird (Focus WRC08) and Jamaican John Powell, who rallies under the flag of his adopted homeland, Trinidad. 'Birdy' has comfortably the best record of the International influx, having previously finished second to Kris Meeke in 2008 and 2009.

Having won Rally Trinidad in 2010, Powell

debuted his Impreza S14 in Barbados last September, then won December's Rally Jamaica. If he takes Sol RB – he has twice finished second in Toyota Corolla WRCs – he would be the first to claim the hat-trick.

Steve Perez (Focus WRC07) returns to the WRC class after finishing top historic last year in a Porsche 911 RSR, but many consider Rob Swann the 'dark horse' this year. After becoming the only driver to win Group N in Barbados and Jamaica in the same year, he stepped up with a rented Impreza S12 last year to finish fifth. When you read this, he'll be testing his former Impreza N14, which has been stripped to a bare shell, lightened, dipped and re-sprayed, then fitted with a WRC build spec engine, six-speed sequential gearbox and active centre diff.

After his second consecutive Rallye Sunseeker National victory last month, former UK National Champion Roger Duckworth will enjoy a repeat all-expenses paid trip, presented by the BRC, in association with the island's private-sector Tourism Development Corporation (TDC). Seventh last year in his early Impreza WRC, he won the weekend's final stage, the Shell V-Power SuperSpecial.

There will be a gripping 2WD battle too. Last year, locals Neil Armstrong (Toyota Starlet) and Ian Warren (Suzuki Swift) swapped stage wins back and forth, until Warren slid off.

More players will have leading roles this year, including brothers Roger and Barry Mayers (Starlet), Stuart Maloney (Peugeot 306 Maxi) and more BMWs than you can shake a stick at (currently nine). Log on to www.rallybarbados.bb for more details!



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