

SOL RALLY BARBADOS

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Allan Mackay



Costin Hurley



D. O'Brien



Eddie Power



The Irish Visitors



Joe McQuillan



Martin Donnelly



Maurice Moffett Scrutiny

Former UK National Rally Champion Paul Bird successfully defended his Sol Rally Barbados title, crowning a remarkable record in his six years contesting the Caribbean's biggest annual motor sport International.

Second on his first two visits, third twice and now a back-to-back winner, he is also the only driver to have finished on the podium of the island's premier event six times in a row.

'Birdy' and Welsh co-driver Aled Davies received their trophies at a packed prize-giving at The Boatyard on the outskirts of the island's capital, Bridgetown. Their trophy haul also included those for first in WRC-1, while their Ford Focus WRC08 was highest-placed overseas four-wheel-drive car.

The winning margin – 24.54

Bird's Bajan



WINNERS: PAUL BIRD & ALED DAVIES

Irish & UK Crews

More than 10 Irish crews made the trip across the Atlantic ocean and during the opening leg, it was Tommy Doyle and Liam Moynihan who were quickest out of the blocks in their Renault Clio. They started the day in an impressive 15th overall with their two-wheel-drive car but were later caught out on a patch of oil, sending the crew off the road.

"We were told there was oil on the stage beforehand," a disappointed Doyle said afterwards, "but we were told it was at a different corner!"

Doyle was not the only driver who had faced troubles. Glenn Campbell and Sarah Whelan were lucky to still be in the event as their Nissan Micra suffered with almost complete brake failure.

"We were off the road on stage three," Campbell explained. "We went straight on at a square corner...I was just waiting for the bang. The tree's branches covered almost half of the car but luckily the impact just cracked the front bumper."

Already suffering with brake trouble, the problem became progressively worse with the brake pedal going to the floor. The Ballyclare driver had to be extremely cautious for the remainder of the day but luckily

his DMH Automotive service crew were able to fix the problem in time for the Sunday stages.

The crew faced more drama with a puncture on the Sunday opener but after changing the wheel, they were able to go on a charge. Campbell became embroiled in a battle for second in class and after a solid drive, the Micra crew secured the class position as well as 35th overall.



County Antrim's Joe McQuillan was another pilot who suffered with brake troubles, and a first stage incident failed to help matters. Navigated by Annette Daly, who was enjoying her first ever event, McQuillan clattered the corner of his Evo on stage one.

The impact bent a subframe and with no replacement available, he was forced to drive the remainder of the event with the problem. However, his braking troubles were



to become a more serious affair, and although he didn't realise it at the time, he went 'OTL' during leg one. That meant that despite completing all of the stages and setting some top 25 stage times, he was classified as a non-finisher.

In the end, it was McQuillan's Group A class rival Michael O'Leary who claimed first in class. New York resident O'Leary, who moved from Ireland around 30 years ago, had a last minute change in navigator after his brother fell ill. Sean Hayde stepped into the breach, and together they brought their Evo X home at the top of the class and in 44th overall.

Meanwhile, Eddie Power and MJ Morrissey had been eyeing up the top spot amongst the Irish finishers in their Corolla WRC. Unfortunately suspected driveshaft trouble just a couple of stages from the finish put paid to those hopes, although Power was able to drive through the last couple of stages at low speed to secured 27th overall.

Instead, the top Irish honours went to Eddie's son, Keith Power, who had Jonathan McGrath calling

Best



seconds – was the biggest since 2005, the other podium finishers being Jamaica's Jeff Pantan and Mike Fennell Jnr (Focus WRC06), one place higher than last year, and 12-time winner Roger 'The Sheriff' Skeete, co-driven by Louis Venezia in his Subaru Impreza WRC S12.

Bird said: "After winning last year, I wanted a taste of that again, so I was determined to repeat my victory. We had a good run and had no major issues with the car and, for once, I didn't make too many mistakes."

Just behind the overall battle, there was more intrigue in WRC-2, catering for cars built before the end of 2003, such as local Toyota dealer Roger Hill's Corolla WRC, which led the class by 10secs at the end of Saturday; Hill had claimed only one stage win and admitted that he should have gone faster on the rain-affected stages.

UK drivers Roger Duckworth (Impreza WRC S6), Kevin Procter (Impreza WRC S7) and Rob Swann (Impreza B13) shared the remaining stage wins between

the notes. They brought their Renault Clio S1600 home in 21st overall and second in class.

Raymond Conlon and Darren McCague were just a few places behind them in 24th overall. They had struggled with intercom problems during the opening day but borrowed Tommy Doyle's helmets for leg two which sorted out their troubles.

Hot on their heels were Maurice Moffett and Jason McKenna in 26th overall. In what was their first visit to the island, they lost some time with a couple of spins but still managed to pick up second in class.

Martin Donnelly and Brian Doherty secured 30th overall in their Mitsubishi Lancer Evo 9 after what was a virtually trouble-free run, while England's Andrew Siddall took his Mark 1 Escort into 31st overall, six seconds behind Donnelly.

Andrew Jones, affectionately known as 'pop tart' by some of the visiting international crews (for reasons that only they understand!) took 32nd overall alongside navigator Mick Squires. Meanwhile, Scotland's Allan Mackay, who had Scarva's Mo Downey on the notes, secured 36th overall after a final stage scare resulted in them visiting a cane field!

John Hardman employed Trinidad's Vishal Dhanraj to call the notes, and together they secured 37th overall despite almost

running out of oil. Danny O'Brien and Barry McNulty brought their Toyota Starlet home in 41st overall and claimed third in class with their Toyota Starlet while Andrew Costin-Hurley and Rob Brook brought their potent Puma home in 46th position.

Paul Rees and Paul Briggs took

We went straight on at a square corner... I was just waiting for the bang. The tree's branches covered almost half of the car but luckily the impact just cracked the front bumper

- Glenn Campbell

their Vauxhall Astra into 48th position, just ahead of the Anglia belonging to Euan Mackay and Calum Macleod. Peter Gallagher and Ross Forde completed the Irish finishers in 50th overall with their Peugeot 206, just ahead of England's Ross and Rob Weir who enjoyed their first event in their brand new Triumph TR7 V8.

Andy Hawkins and Del Johnson completed the UK finishers in 55th

them, Duckworth recovering from an off on the opening stage, Procter also in trouble early in the day with overheating and anti-lag issues.

Duckworth was fastest on all 11 Sunday stages, finishing fifth overall – moving up from seventh and sixth in the previous two years – heading Hill home by 26 seconds, with Procter third. Swann finished 13th overall, reinforcing his determination to return with a World Car capable of winning overall.



overall, although there were a few other entrants of note that didn't enjoy much luck in Barbados this year.

They included Kenny Hall and Fenny Wesselink, who retired their Corsa with engine failure on the start line of the practice run for the Scotiabank King of the Hill event, which took place one week before the rally.

Steve Perez and Paul Spooner managed to compete the King of the Hill, only to retire after a spin during the early stages of the rally resulted in terminal clutch trouble. Nigel Worswick and Lindsey Pilkington were going well in their Mark 2 Escort until a mechanical problem put them out on day one, although they returned for day two and picked up a Sunday Runners trophy.

Other retirements included Harold Morley and Graeme Finlayson (clipped a wall), Martin Stockdale and Gary Miller (differential), Stuart Deeley and Alastair Dodd (left the road), as well as Enda McCormack and Kieran McElhinney.

Most of the crews and spectators have already returned home, so if you see any glum faces at any of our local events, chances are you're looking at a someone suffering from post-Rally Barbados depression.

But keep the chin up everyone... it's less than a year until next year's Sol Rally Barbados!



Glenn Campbell



Keith Power



Martin Stockdale



O'Leary Hayde



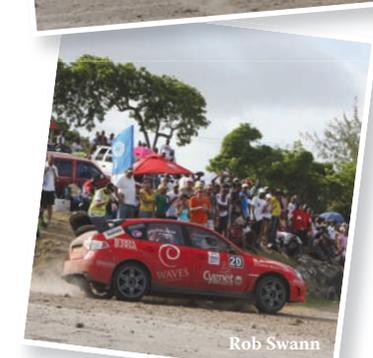
O'Leary Hayde



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