

Tindall Wins But Mackay Shines

Round 3 of the 2017 Junior 1000 Ecosse Challenge was the EACC 5 Star Junior Stages at Kames Motorsport Complex, Muirkirk on 7th May 2017 – a very different challenge compared to rounds 1 and 2 for the young drivers with short, narrow and very technical stages. The sun belted down all day (leaving a few lobsters to suffer the next day), the competition was close, there were some mechanical dramas but no serious incidents. 9 Juniors started and 9 recorded finishes but 4 collected stage maximums for mechanical issues and a “wee off”.

After 4 stages Ewan Tindall/Paul Hudson (Citroen C1) had pulled out a second on each stage to lead by 4 seconds from Jude MacDonald/Michael Cruickshank (Skoda Citigo) and Johnnie Mackay/Gordon Reid (Suzuki Alto) - who recorded exactly the same times on each stage. Mackay was having a good day but MacDonald was finding his brakes a bit worrying – sometimes the fronts locked and other times they were ok. Over the next 4 stages, the battle at the top continued. Tindall always kept his nose in front – but just by a second here and there from Mackay who took 3 seconds from a hesitant MacDonald. And that was the way the story unfolded for the other 6 stages (stages 7 and 8 were cancelled to make up time lost to a late arrival of a Doctor) On stages 10 and 12 the top 3 scored exactly the same times and Tindall and Mackay were never more than a second apart from the last stage where Mackay dropped 2 seconds. The final outcome was Tindall by 7 seconds from Mackay who was a further 4 seconds ahead of MacDonald. There was really nothing in it and one wrong step would have punished either of the top 3 but they all kept their cool and put in brilliant performances.

Lewis Winder/Mike Baird brought their Toyota Aygo home in fourth but they struggled to recover a lost 7 or 8 seconds on stage 1 with an overshoot. But the times were strong all day and Lewis was happier with the car after a day's testing the previous day.

And “Joy of Joy” for Alice Paterson/Ian Crosbie (Peugeot 107) who took 5th place. Ok, the 4 competitors behind her had problems but Alice showed real improvement in her driving and the pace picked up well throughout the day. And that was running on bog standard front suspension – the competition struts have not been repaired yet after developing leaks at Ingliston.

It was all going well for Lewis Haining/George Myatt, Andrew Blackwood/Gordon Winning, Peter Beaton/Dean Ross and Amy Mccubbin/Brian McClelland up to stage 5. Haining was fourth, Beaton and Blackwood were tied in 5th and Mccubbin was settling into her brand spanking new Skoda Citigo which was finished at 3am that morning!! But first Haining and Beaton broke drive shafts on ss5 followed by Blackwood on ss6. And Mccubbin tested the strength of the Citigo front bumper when a moment of indecision over a call from co-driver McClelland ended up with a visit into the tyres on stage 5. So several stage maximums there but all cars were repaired and out again for stage 9.

And so we must wait until the next round to see how the top 3 positions will unfold. But Tindall is definitely on a roll with 2 victories in the Junior 1000 Ecosse Challenge and 2 wins in the Southern Junior 1000 Championship to lead the points in both. But Mackay is clearly bonding with his Suzuki but will it be the same at the more open stages at Leuchars? And will MacDonald crack the braking issue to repeat his performance on round 2 at Arbroath? Who knows?? We will have to wait and see but it is a difficult call. Exciting stuff though.



Lawrence of Kemnay is part of a National initiative to get youngsters in the 14 to 17 age group involved in competitive special stage rallying. The Junior 1000 Ecosse Challenge started in 2012 with 10 competitors. Junior 1000 Championships also run in England/Wales and Northern Ireland



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MacDonald/Cruickshank – 3rd



Tindall/Hudson 1st



Mackay/Reid – 2nd

