

First Scottish Victory for Beaton

The second round of the 2018 Junior 1000 Ecosse Challenge took place at Kames Motorsport Centre, Muirkirk on 22nd April 2018. 14 crews entered - including 2 rally first timers and 1 crew from the F1000 J1000 Championship. The day turned out to be one of Joy, Despair, and Drama with the weather adding to the situation. Joy for the 6 crews who came through the day relatively unscathed and Despair for the other 8 who experienced all sorts of problems. Drama came on the second last stage when hard charging Ollie Hunter/ Tom Hynd (Peugeot 107) ended up on their side.

Things started to go wrong on the second stage, when the winner of round 1 – Lewis Haining/George Myatt (Skoda Citigo) - broke a drive shaft at a hairpin and got a stage maximum. That put Johnnie Mackay/Gordon Reid (Suzuki Alto) into the lead but with F1000 J1000 crew Elliot Payne/Simon Rogers (Citroen C1) breathing down their necks. Going into stage 8, Mackay had a 3 second lead but he fell foul of the wet conditions and ended up off the road on the grass to get a maximum for the stage. Payne then moved into the lead by 23 seconds from Peter Beaton/Andrew Grant (Peugeot 107). Beaton put up a good fight and had reduced the gap to Payne to 19 seconds by the end of stage 12. But Beaton was under pressure from Lewis Winder/Mike Baird (Nissan Micra) all day and there was never more than a few seconds between them. At the end of stage 12, Payne led by 19 seconds from Beaton, who was now in a tie with Winder. Andrew Blackwood/Richard Stewart (Citroen C1) were in 4th place, 10 seconds behind Winder, regretting the earlier spin when he lost at least 10 seconds earlier in the day,

But it all went wrong for Payne in the 13th stage!! After an overshoot at the stage split, he reversed back down the stage and was disqualified and excluded because of this manoeuvre. This put Beaton into a slender lead over Winder with Blackwood trying hard to get into the act. Going into the last 2 stages the top 3 were Beaton, Winder, and Blackwood. There was 3 seconds between Beaton and Winder's old faithful Micra with Blackwood 9 seconds behind Winder. And, would you believe it - they all did the same total time over the last 2 stages - 3mins 20 seconds. So Beaton took his maiden victory in the Junior 1000 Ecosse Challenge and Winder took a Micra onto the podium for the first time in a long time. Blackwood was justly rewarded with a podium 3rd place. And coming home in 4th place was one of our newcomers Fraser Anderson in another Micra on his 3rd rally after a very solid and competent drive throughout the day under the watchful eye of experienced co-driver Graeme Sherry. At various points during the day, father George was to be seen frantically looking under the bonnet of the Micra looking for "more gee gees"!!

Coming home in 5th and 6th and salvaging some points came Johnnie Mackay and Lewis Haining. They scored stage maximums of 4 minutes on one stage each but then had the usual competition over the remaining 14 with Mackay coming out on top by 5 seconds.

The first 2018 newcomer came home in 7th place on his very first rally. Cameron Davidson in his Micra (the ex Jude MacDonald one reshelled) with Sue - the other half of the "rallying Hynds" on the maps, hardly put a foot wrong and a wee smile appeared on the usually very serious face at the end. Dad Simon's investment in all new suspension earlier in the week had paid off.

And in 8th place was the first of the ladies – Alice Paterson in her Peugeot 107, and Ian Crosbie shouting out the corners and the very occasional – "Keep it off the grass". One big spin lost them some time on stage 9 but this performance shows just how much Alice has moved forward since joining the Juniors.

"New" lady driver for 2018, Erica Winning was next home in 9th. In the hotseat and charged with keeping order in the cabin was Mark Runciman. Not sure if taxi drivers make good passengers!! All went well until ss10 when Erica took to the scenery and bounced the car off some solid objects – none that stopped the car going but inflicting a bit of damage to the bodywork and front suspension. Back in service, Dad and Douglas got stuck into the car and got Erica back out for stage 11. The last few stages were done at a more sedate pace - Erica thinking about Mark's blood pressure (and her Mum's and Dad's!!) But top marks for spirit and not getting upset about the whole thing.

10th was first timer Aaron Webster in his ex Amy McCubbin Micra and with late recruit and veteran Junior co-driver (if you can get such a thing) Phil Sandham sitting with him. Like Erica, it was all going well with confidence and times improving every stage up until ss11. A trip into the undergrowth at the same spot as Erica put a damper on things but he seemed to get away with minor bits of body damage and was able to get back out for the last 5 stages, albeit at a more moderate pace!!

And last scoring competitor was Amy McCubbin in the beautiful blue and pink Skoda Citigo. The day did not start well for Amy when a replacement had to be found for regular co-driver Jane Nicol who was not able to get back from the previous day's Speyside Rally in Elgin. A search around the local "who is doing nothing on Sunday but has the qualifications" unearthed an unsuspecting Taylor Gibb. And Taylor showed just how good a bloke he is by stepping in to the hotseat beside Amy. Being a typical driver himself there was a lot of "What do you want?" when

heads appeared at the window at stage starts and finishes. But the pair enjoyed their experience – most of the time. Taylor was seen to disappear very quickly to the toilet right after Amy had a lurid excursion onto the grass on the tricky stage 11. But Amy was heavily penalized by 34 minutes when she broke a driveshaft on stage 3 and as a consequence missed stage 4. But over the last few stages she was never more than a couple of seconds off the times of the top 3.

We had 3 non finishers - Elliot Payne/Simon Rogers (excluded for reversing at the split on stage 13 and at an arena that is Kames, everything is seen by everybody), Ollie Hunter/Tom Hynd (broke a drive shaft on stage 6 and did not do the last stage after rolling on stage 15) and Jack Hall/Niall Thomson (out with a seized engine after stage 13).

It was a day of some great achievements for Peter Beaton, (first Junior 1000 Ecosse Challenge win) Lewis Winder (Micra in 2nd place) and Fraser Anderson (Micra in 4th place) but one of the stars who was not classified as a finisher had to be Ollie Hunter. His day was ruined when he broke a drive shaft on stage 6 but he then went on to post 5 stage fastest and 3 joint fastest times right up to the point that he rolled out of the rally on the second last stage. Methinks that the late great Colin McRae would have been proud of him. Definitely one to watch.

The next outing for the Junior 1000 Ecosse Challenge will be at the Granite Rally, Leuchars on 26th May. 2018.



Andrew Blackwood, Richard Stewart/Peter Beaton, Andrew Grant/Lewis Winder, Mike Baird



Peter Beaton - First



Lewis Winder – Second



Andrew Blackwood - Third