



DUNLOP
NATIONAL RALLY CHAMPIONSHIP



Round 4 Review Courtesy of Martin Walsh Media Co-Ordinator Dunlop National Rally Championship

Maguire Is Monaghan Hero

Dunlop National Rally Championship leader, Niall Maguire (Subaru WRC) withstood a strong challenge from Derek McGarrity (Subaru WRC) to notch up his first victory of the current campaign on the Hillgrove Hotel Monaghan Rally, the fourth round of the Dunlop series.

At the conclusion of the nine stage event, Maguire, who has now won his home event for a sixth time, (his co-driver, Enda Sherry has tasted victory for a fourth consecutive season) finished 26 seconds ahead of Derek McGarrity/James McKee (Subaru) with Mel Evans/Patrick Walsh (Subaru WRC) a further 32 seconds behind in third. Gary McPhillips/Mark Tierney (Ford Escort) won the Modified category and were fourth overall. The Group N category was won by Sam Moffett/Domhnall Lennon (Mitsubishi), 20 year old Moffett also won the Dunlop "Driver of the Day" award.

Overnight rain made the conditions very slippery as Kevin Barrett set the pace on the first stage, his Subaru extracting a four second lead over the Subaru of Niall Maguire with fellow Monaghan ace, Daniel McKenna in his Mk. 2 Ford Escort, a stunning third, two seconds further behind. Remarkably, McKenna reckoned his choice of a soft compound tyre cost him time. Mel Evans slotted his Subaru into fourth place despite stalling at the start line. Although the Escort of Gary McPhillips was misfiring, he was in fifth place - a second ahead of the Subaru WRC of Derek McGarrity. The top ten also included the Escorts of Manus Kelly and Rodney Wilton, Maurice Moffett (Toyota Starlet), John Cairns (Subaru) and John O'Donnell (Escort).

Unfortunately, Barrett retired with head gasket trouble. Maguire was quickest through stages two and three to move into a 15 second lead over Evans. At the Monaghan service, Maguire reported that the stages were still very slippery, meanwhile, Evans continued to stall his Subaru at the stage starts. McPhillips maintained third even though his Escort continued to be troubled by a misfire. McGarrity in fourth, was 34 seconds off top spot but reckoned he could take time out of his rivals on the second loop.

Wilton lost time when he encountered the punctured Escort of Daniel McKenna, he reckoned the episode cost him as much as twelve seconds. Although McKenna made it to the stage finish, he retired on the road section. Another local ace in trouble was Maurice Moffett, intercom woes distracted him and he lost over 20 minutes with an off road excursion, he withdrew at the service halt. Kelly was sixth followed by John Cairns (Subaru) and Enda McNulty

(Ford Escort). The final places in the top ten were occupied by John O'Donnell (Ford Escort) and Group N leader, Danny McBride (Mitsubishi).

McGarrity duly clocked the best time on S.S. 4 to move into third - 25 seconds off the lead with Evans 14 seconds off top spot. Maguire was quickest through S.S. 5 but McGarrity gained nine seconds on the sixth stage to cut Maguire's advantage to 17 seconds at the final service halt. Evans in third - seven seconds adrift of McGarrity- clipped a rock and bent the steering on Stage 6. Meanwhile, McPhillips changed the plugs in his Escort that showed a great improvement through stages five and six. The similar Escorts of Rodney Wilton and Manus Kelly completed the top six. John Cairns (Subaru) held seventh while the Escorts of Damien Gallagher, Eugene Ferry and Brian Brogan rounded of the top ten.

On the first stage of the final loop, Maguire and McGarrity shared equal fastest time. On the penultimate test, McGarrity lost a few seconds on one of the junctions soon after the stage start that ended his chances of reeling in Maguire. Maguire sealed victory, his sixth in Monaghan, with fastest time on the final stage and finished 26 seconds ahead of McGarrity. Evans was third. In terms of the Dunlop series, Maguire has an eight-point advantage over Evans and McGarrity, who are equal second.

Meanwhile, McPhillips won the Modified category, Rodney Wilton crashed his Escort on the penultimate test. In the race for Group N honours, Monaghan's, Sam Moffett (Mitsubishi) set a cracking pace on the final loop to edge out Danny McBride (Mitsubishi) on a tiebreak. Moffett also won the Dunlop "Driver of the Day" award.

1. N. Maguire/E. Sherry (Subaru WRC) 1h. 22m. 12s.
2. D. McGarrity/J. McKee (Subaru WRC) 1h. 22m. 38s.
3. M. Evans/P. Walsh (Subaru WRC) 1h. 23m. 10s.
4. G. McPhillips/M. Tierney (Ford Escort) 1h. 24m. 49s.
5. M. Kelly/D. Barrett (Ford Escort) 1h. 25m. 25s.
6. J. Cairns/J. Cairns (Subaru) 1h. 26m. 36s.
7. S. Moffett/D. Lennon (Mitsubishi) 1h. 27m. 26s.
8. D. McBride/A. Given (Mitsubishi) 1h. 27m. 26s.
9. S. O'Connell/S. McGee (Ford Escort) 1h. 27m. 31s.
10. B. Brogan/D. McGettigan (Ford Escort) 1h. 27m. 57s.

Dunlop National Rally Championship (Positions after Round 4): 1. N. Maguire 64pts; =2. M. Evans & D. McGarrity 56pts; 4. K. Barrett 36pts;



Photo Courtesy Martin Walsh ©
Sam Moffett Receiving the Dunlop Driver of the Day Award from Richard Talbot Chairman of the Dunlop National Rally Championship.

