

Press Information

For immediate release

TWO IN A ROW FOR PEARSON IN 2016

Garry Pearson and Robbie Mitchell took their second consecutive victory of the year on round 4 of the 2016 ARR Craib Scottish Rally Championship, the RSAC Scottish Rally.

The competitors were faced with an extra 20 competitive miles due to the fact they were sharing the stages with the drivers from the MSA British Rally Championship for the first time in two years.

Duns crew Pearson and Mitchell took the SRC win by just under 10 seconds on stages that were mostly dry but increasingly slippery in the afternoon. Pearson spun his Fiesta R5 on the opening test, Twiglees, which lost him 20 seconds, but some blisteringly quick stage times in late morning and early afternoon saw him clinch the SRC win come the finish in Dumfries.

Garry said: "We're delighted to be here, especially after the spin. After that we managed to pull forward and then manage the gap so we're very happy. Not an easy one though."

Once again, Pearson's closest challenger was the bright orange Subaru Impreza of defending champions Jock Armstrong and Paula Swinscoe. The Border Counties winner finished 9.9 seconds adrift in ninth place overall, but his rally wasn't without problems.

A sump guard fitted to the bottom of the Impreza to cope with the rough stages in the forests around Dumfries melted the exhaust, trapping the heat into the cockpit, which saw the Castle Douglas driver bathed in sweat after the stages.

The boys in service at Heathhall drilled holes into the sump to cope with the problem, but Armstrong couldn't close the gap to Pearson and Mitchell in front.

He said: "It's been an ok rally, had highs and lows but that's how it goes. Mike [Faulkner] has had a good day, coming very close but we'll need to do something if we want to beat Garry [Pearson]!"

Mike Faulkner and Peter Foy were the star performers of the rally, taking their second consecutive third place finish in what was the same podium as the Speyside Stages two months ago.

Faulkner once again hustled everything he could from his Mitsubishi Lancer Evolution IX, but on the Scottish it really paid dividends as he came mightily close to overhauling Jock



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Armstrong on the final test, Mount Joe, in the end finishing a mere 0.9 seconds behind overall.

Mike was on the pace from the get go, but spun on a bridge in the second loop of tests which ultimately saw him having to settle for third place in a performance much more like the Faulkner we have seen over the years.

He said: "The pace was right, the car was right but there were still these niggling little things we need to sort out. We tried hard, drove very well but made some mistakes. It's frustrating as we came very close [to Jock]."

The battle for fourth, fifth and sixth places was an intriguing one all day with the Mitsubishi Lancers of Mark McCulloch and Bruce McCombie battling Rory Young's Fiesta R5.

Local boy Mark McCulloch with Michael Hendry achieved two of his pre-event ambitions to finish the rally and achieve a good result for his championship with fourth overall.

After suffering teething issues with his new Evo in the first half of the year, McCulloch found the car "spot on" and it showed in his stage times, as he took twelfth overall in the standings.

Despite feeling he was too cautious in Twiglees and suffering a puncture for half of the stage, he finished just over 10 seconds behind BRC runner Matt Edwards in a similar car.

With fourth McCulloch maintains third place in the championship.

Coming home fifth overall were Dumfries' Rory Young and Jedburgh co-driver Dave Robson in their Ford Fiesta R5.

Young made his first appearance of the season on the Scottish, and was proving he had lost none of the speed that saw him clinch a podium finish on the event 12 months ago.

At the end, Rory finished just 1.3 seconds behind McCulloch's Mitsubishi in the epic battle for fourth, but if it weren't for a 20 second penalty for leaving the first service a little too late, he would have taken fourth.

Bruce McCombie and Michael Coutts lost out in the battle for fourth but took a well-deserved sixth place in the SRC after another consistent performance.

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The Banchory driver was, in his own words, “not quick enough” at the start of the day but did enough to stay in touch with those ahead of him and maintain a good points finish for the championship.

Barry Groundwater and Sean Donnelly took seventh on the Scottish rally in their Mitsubishi Lancer Evolution X, 20 seconds ahead of Scott McCombie and Mark Fisher’s Evo IX who revitalised their season after a disappointing couple of events.

Just four seconds back was the Subaru of Ian Baumgart from Hawick and Mike Dickson from Galashiels.

They finished just 0.8 seconds ahead of Inverness duo Donnie MacDonald and Andrew Falconer who battled brake problems throughout the event, leading them to concentrate primarily on their BRC National Cup push after another disappointing SRC result for the winners of round 1.

Alasdair Graham finished 11th in his Mitsubishi Lancer Evolution IX, another good result for his Class 10 and Challengers aspirations.

Brian Watson (Stonehaven) and Iain Wilson (Dalbeattie) were separated by a slender 0.7 seconds after 7 special stages, taking home best results of the season of 12th and 13th respectively.

There was a scary moment for Fraser Wilson who rolled his Mitsubishi on SS4, whilst Andrew Gallacher retired from a strong points scoring position on the final stage.

Shaun Sinclair had another troublesome rally in his Subaru Impreza WRC, suffering a puncture on the opening test and then cutting a corner result in driveshaft issues on the second. He eventually retired on the final stage with clutch woes.

He provided quote of the rally at the end of SS5, saying “When you start enjoying your breakdowns you know you’ve made it.”

The overall event was won by Elfyn Evans (Fiesta R5) ahead of Tom Cave (Fiesta R5) and Desi Henry (Fabia R5).

2014 Scottish Champion Euan Thorburn claimed fourth whilst 2009, 10, 11, 12 and 13 Champion David Bogie was all set to take second but to retire after the end of the final stage with radiator damage.



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After four rounds of the series, Garry Pearson still heads the championship from current champion Jock Armstrong, with the impressive Mark McCulloch holding onto third with just two rallies to go.

The next event on the 2016 ARR Craib Scottish Rally Championship calendar is the Coltel Grampian Stages on 13 August, based in Aberdeen.

You can keep up to date with the SRC via the website www.scottishrallychampionship.co.uk or through Facebook and Twitter (@MSA_SRC).

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Ends

*Luke Barry
Press Officer
ARR Craib MSA Scottish Rally Championship*

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