

Press Information

For immediate release

SRC BATTLE SET TO CONTINUE IN ELGIN

The 2016 ARR Craib Scottish Rally Championship heads to Elgin for round 3 of the series, the McDonald & Munro Speyside Stages. The event has moved from its traditional summer date, but that has done nothing to deter the drivers away, with a strong 120 car entry for the event.

Leading them away are 2014 Scottish Champions Euan Thorburn and Paul Beaton, who are giving their Peugeot 208 T16 R5 its Scottish debut. It's unclear whether Euan will register for SRC championship points.

However one man who most certainly is registered for points is 2015 Champion Jock Armstrong with Paula Swinscoe alongside. The Subaru driver got his championship campaign back on track last time out on the Brick & Steel Border Counties Rally, and his hoping for more of the same in Elgin.

"The result on the Borders was amazing as I have not had a lot of luck there over the years." He said.

[The plan for the Speyside is] just like the last rally, quick out of the box and no mistakes like forgetting to put it in gear on the start line!"

Starting third on the road are the Duns crew of Garry Pearson and Robbie Mitchell in their Ford Fiesta R5. Pearson and Mitchell are one of three R5 entrants for the Speyside, a record number for the SRC, and find themselves at the top of the championship after two rallies.

Pearson, who missed out on a win in Jedburgh through the tie break, said: "I don't think we could have expected what is almost a 'dream start' for us."

"I think we can only build on our result at the Border Counties. We didn't expect to or try to be in first position or tied first. We tried our best in the last two stages to keep in third position and ended up challenging second."

"It's been 6 years since I've been in Elgin so I'm sure the experienced competitors will be hard to beat."

Mike Faulkner and Peter Foy had a rather lonely run on the Border Counties, coming home a solid fourth overall. Despite Mike pushing his Evo IX as hard as it could go, he couldn't stay in touch with the trio at the front but had a healthy gap back to fifth place Mark McCulloch



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and Michael Hendry.

The pair will be looking to improve on their fifth place finish on last year's Speyside.

Debuting the Ford Focus WRC last time out as his Subaru was still being repaired after its engine issues on the Snowman, Shaun Sinclair took to the car instantly, despite feeling he was braking too early for the corners. He finished just seven seconds shy of victory after six forest tests.

The ex Petter Solberg machine however will be back out for the Speyside.

Shaun said: "I'll be using the Subaru on the Speyside to compare it to the Focus. If I could get back on the podium I would be delighted."

"I have always enjoyed the rally. The stages are usually good, with hard gravel. We will give it 100% as usual!"

Donnie MacDonald and Andrew Falconer head to Elgin in good form, after winning the BRC National class of the Circuit of Ireland Rally earlier this month.

However, Donnie suffered a disappointing Border Counties plagued with various issues including a puncture, which meant he lost the championship lead he gained after his opening round victory.

John MacCrone and Rhianon Gelsomino were many people's tip for success this season with their R5 Ford Fiesta, but confidence sapping challenging conditions and turbo clamps have prevented the pair from scoring a good result thus far this season. However, the Speyside Stages could be where that all changes.

John said: "I still need to achieve a solid result to build some confidence so this is my aim." "Having not done many miles in the car we need to build the speed rather than trying to make it all happen at once and having an accident. It's a great bit of machinery but you need to drive it hard to make it work."

"I'm not going to pay too much attention to what everyone else is doing and just drive my own event."

Bruce McCombie and Michael Coutts finished a respectable sixth overall last time out on the Border Counties, one better than their seventh place finish on the Snowman.

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McCombie is more of a Richard Burns than a Colin McRae, so expect another strong top 10 finish from the Banchory driver on the Speyside.

Mark McCulloch and Michael Hendry have got their 2016 SRC season off to a flying start, almost winning the first round in Inverness and coming home fifth in the Borders despite not being happy with the car's setup.

Ahead of round 3, McCulloch said: "We've made changes to the suspension but to be honest we haven't had a chance to try and of them so will just have to wait until the first stage to see if it's better or not."

"The Speyside stages are some of the best in the country and I always enjoy coming up to them. It's also Michael's home event so we will have a good go and see how we get on!"

Duns driver Dale Robertson with Stuart Loudon on the notes surprised everybody with an incredible second place finish on the Snowman after taking a year away from the SRC in 2015.

However, the Border Counties didn't go so smoothly, with the Evo IX running in just two wheel drive for two and a half stages as Robertson broke a driveshaft. He put in a strong recovery drive however to finish seventh, and could be a dark horse for a podium finish in Elgin.

The McDonald & Munro Speyside Stages will be run on 23 April, with the first two special stages at Cooper Park being broadcast live on the Speyside Stages TV YouTube channel.

Coming soon is a preview to the battles in the various classes on the Speyside.

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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