

Press Information



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MITSUBISHI RALLIART EVOLUTION CHALLENGE UK ROUND 2 - REPORT



- Pirelli International Rally
23rd & 24th April 2010.
- Jonny Greer makes it two out of two.
- Second-placed Daniel Sigurdarson pleased he made the trip from Iceland.
- Déjà vu for Alastair Fisher as transmission troubles strike again.

25th April 2010

Jonny Greer and co-driver Dai Roberts recorded their second Mitsubishi Ralliart Evolution Challenge win of the season on this weekend's Pirelli International Rally, round two of the official series for Group N Lancers and the Dulux Trade MSA British Rally Championship. With their performance also seeing them finish in second place overall, they now lead both the Evolution Challenge and the British Championship.

Based at Carlisle Racecourse, at which the start, finish and service area were located, the competitive element of the rally took place entirely within Kielder Forest. Starting on Friday evening, the route saw three stages ran in the dark with a further nine during the course of Saturday, the total of which provided 100 miles of dry and dusty gravel roads.

For two teams, the dramas began even before the rally started, East African crew Peter Horsey and Moses Matovu unable to get to the event due to last week's closure of European airspace. A similar fate almost befell Icelandic crew Daniel Sigurdarson and his sister and co-driver Asta Sigurdardottir, who managed to jump onto a plane as soon as the airspace opened.

Once again, the fastest Evolution Challenge crew in the early stages were Alastair Fisher/Rory Kennedy. Even with their intercom playing up in SS1, a rear puncture in SS2 and hearing a strange noise coming from the front of their car in SS3, they pulled out a lead of 26-seconds in the Evo Challenge by the time cars returned to Carlisle for the overnight halt.

And, as if night stages in Kielder Forest were not enough to deal with, competitors reported that they were having to slow down on the straight because of dust from previous cars that was hanging in the windless air. In second place and having been affected by the poor visibility, Sigurdarson/Sigurdardottir we heard to say they were concerned that they had brought the volcanic ash clouds with them!

Third place were Greer/Roberts, who lost fifth gear six miles before the end of SS3 and were worried that things would get worse. However, they were able to make it back to the service park where the gearbox was changing in readiness for the following day.

Owen Murphy/James O'Brien were pleased to be in fourth place, but frustrated that their car's engine was down on power, a mapping issue causing them to lose time. Their situation was compounded by an unusually low seeding that meant they were catching the cars ahead of them and having to slow down because of the dust.

However, things were even worse for David Bogie/Kevin Rae. With their car back to 100% following its loss of power on round one, all was going well until they hit a rock on stage two, which pushed the sump guard into the radiator. A few miles later the 2008 Evolution Challenge Champion saw steam coming from the front of his car and, realising what had happened, nursed it to the end of the stage. But with the head gasket now blown, the Scot's rally was over.

During the first loop of stages on Saturday morning, Fisher/Kennedy extended their lead. But on SS7, history from round one repeated itself when a problem with the car's transmission brought their rally to an abrupt halt. Another frustrating end to an excellent drive.

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Slowed when they caught other competitors who were having problems, Sigurdarson/Sigurdardottir were being reeled in by Greer/Roberts, who's car now had its full complement of gears and, when Fisher/Kennedy retired, it was Greer/Roberts that emerged from stage seven in the lead.

As cars entered the final service halt of the day, Murphy/O'Brien reported that their engine had started to lose even more power, added to which, it was making some strange noises. Not ones to give up easily they decided to continue and, as it turned out, they were very pleased they did, making it back to Carlisle to claim a well-deserved third in the Evolution Challenge and a fifth place overall.

With the leaders now over half-a-minute ahead of the Icelandic siblings before the final trio of stages, it was only a problem that would see the positions change. But a faultless drive over the final loop meant that Greer/Roberts were to cross the line one-minute 15 seconds ahead of Sigurdarson/Sigurdardottir, their strategy of keeping out of trouble paying off.

And, as others around them fell foul of punctures or problems, they also finished in an impressive second place overall, a result which means they not only top the Evolution Challenge standings, but the British Rally Championship as well.

"This is a great result for us", said Greer. "For a moment I was worried if we would make it on Friday evening when we the gearbox problem, but other than that the car ran perfectly. With the surface really punishing the tyres and others having problems in the closing stages, all we had to do was keep away from punctures and maintain a good pace, so things couldn't have worked out better for us."

The third round of both the Evolution Challenge and the British Championship sees the surface change to asphalt, when the crews tackle the lanes of Berwickshire and the Jim Clark Rally, which takes place on 29th & 30th May.

The 2010 Mitsubishi Ralliart Evolution Challenge UK is supported by: Mitsubishi Motors UK, Pirelli tyres, Sunoco fuels, JRM, Cyprus Automobile Association, Fairways Mitsubishi, Speedline Corse wheels, Murray Motorsport, CL brake pads, Sparco racewear and PIAA lights - who sponsor the junior award for under 25-year old drivers.

For the first time this season the winner of the Evolution Challenge in the UK, Ireland and Sweden, will win the same prize: A supported drive in the FxPro Rally Cyprus, the final round of the IRC (Intercontinental Rally Challenge). Then, whichever of the three teams are first home on this event will be crowned European Evolution Challenge Champions. Added to this, the winning driver in the UK will be a guaranteed nomination for the Pirelli Star Driver shoot-out.

Mitsubishi Ralliart Evolution Challenge UK - Round 2 Results

1 Jonny Greer (Carraduff)/Dai Roberts (Carmarthen)	1:30:31.2
2 Daniel Sigurdarson (Iceland)/Asta Sigurdardottir (Iceland)	1:31:46.1
3 Owen Murphy (Cork)/James O'Brien (Cork)	1:33:33.4

Retirements

SS2 David Bogie (Dumfries)/Kevin Rae (Hawick)	Radiator
SS7 Alastair Fisher (Trillick)/Rory Kennedy (Letterkenny)	Transmission

Series standings

Drivers

1 Jonny Greer	40
2 Daniel Sigurdarson	36
3= David Bogie	16
3= Owen Murphy	16
5 Peter Horsey	15

Co-drivers

1 Dai Roberts	40
2 Asta Sigurdardottir	36
3= Kevin Rae	16
3= James O'Brien	16

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Photo caption

Jonny Greer and co-driver Dai Roberts recorded their second Mitsubishi Ralliart Evolution Challenge UK victory of the season when they won round two on this weekend's Pirelli International Rally (*copyright free image*).

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