

# Press Information



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## MITSUBISHI RALLIART EVOLUTION CHALLENGE UK ROUND 1 - REPORT



- **Bulldog International Rally of North Wales**  
27th March 2010
- **Jonny Greer records maiden Evolution Challenge victory.**
- **Alastair Fisher sets early pace until transmission troubles intervene.**
- **Daniel Sigurdarson claims last-minute second place.**

28th March 2010

This weekend's Bulldog International Rally of North Wales saw Jonny Greer and co-drier Dai Roberts record their first ever Mitsubishi Ralliart Evolution Challenge victory, when they won round one of the 2010 British series by a convincing margin ahead of Icelandic crew Daniel Sigurdarson and Asta Sigurdardottir.

The tenth consecutive season for the Evolution Challenge in the UK shared its opening round with that of the Dulux Trade MSA British Rally Championship, the strong Class N4 (production category) entry seeing six Mitsubishi crews registered for the series.

Based in Welshpool, the rally kicked off with two stages in mid-Wales and the forests of Myherin and Sweet Lamb. Stamping their authority on the Evo Challenge proceedings right from the start were Alastair Fisher/Rory Kennedy, who pulled out a healthy margin of 20 seconds ahead of Greer/Roberts by the time cars returned for the first service halt.

Uncharacteristically a minute behind in third was returning 2008 Evo Challenge Champion David Bogie with co-driver Kevin Rae, who reported he was driving hard and surprised not to be on the pace, although a lack of engine power was suspected to be the cause.

Most unlucky crew of the day were Irish pairing Owen Murphy/James O'Brien, who retired just a few miles into the first stage when a problem with their car's gear selector mechanism meant that they found themselves stuck in fifth. Although they tried to get the stage the clutch eventually burnt out and, with no drive, they were forced to stop - a frustrating conclusion for the whole team, having worked hard over the winter to get the car prepared before the start of the season.

The next two stages were a re-run of the first two and Fisher/Kennedy were flying. Having adapted their pace notes for the second pass they not only set the fastest Evo Challenge times - but the fastest times overall - on both SS3 and SS4. Their Mitsubishi series' lead was made even greater when Greer/Roberts picked up a rear puncture in SS3, the deflated tyre damaging a wheel sensor - which in turn affected the actuation of the active differential system for the remainder of the stage and the one that followed.

Now gathering pace were Icelandic brother and sister Sigurdarson/Sigurdardottir and they were now closing the gap on Bogie/Rae who were still struggling to see why their committed driving was not being rewarded with better times.

Making their debut in the UK were East African crew Peter Horsey and Moses Matovu and, at the second service halt admitted they were taking no risks and were getting to know their brand new Evo X and the British forests, which provided totally different terrain from that of their more local rallies.

There then followed a further four classic Welsh stages before the finish: Big Ray, Dyfi Main, Pantperthog and Gartheniog. Heading off to start the first of these Fisher/Kennedy found they had a 1 minute 40 second lead, with their performance good enough to also see them hold second place overall.

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After yet another good run through SS5, Fisher suddenly noticed something was wrong in the road section before SS6. It turned out to be the car's rear differential, which meant that the 19-year old drove the whole 8.5-mile stage in front-wheel-drive only. Although getting to the finish the car would not pull away from the stop line, which brought his and Kennedy's event to an undeserving conclusion.

This left Greer/Roberts in charge of the Mitsubishi field and, without putting a foot wrong through the final two stages they returned to Welshpool to score their very first Evolution Challenge victory.

"Besides the puncture everything has gone really well today", said Greer. "We found we couldn't match Alastair's pace this morning, but our plan was to make sure we got to the finish. I'm therefore pleased we achieved that and, in doing so, score our first win in the Evo Challenge, which makes this a really good start to the year."

For Bogie/Rae, their event was getting even more surreal. After driving hard all day and unable to post front-running times due to an undetected loss of power, they then found they had collected a seven-minute penalty for changing a wheel at an arrival control. This addition of time meant they dropped to third behind Sigurdarson/Sigurdardottir, who were more than satisfied with their day's rallying – even after clipping a rock in the penultimate stage and bending their Evo X's steering.

Horsey/Matovu were also pleased with their event and returned to the finish without a mark on their new car, having enjoyed their first experience of rallying in the UK – even though temperatures were around 30 degrees centigrade less than they were used to. Their efforts were rewarded with the Sunoco Spirit Award.

The second round of the Mitsubishi series takes place on Friday 23rd and Saturday 24th April, when crews head to the Carlisle-based Pirelli Rally and the demanding stages of Kielder Forest.

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 1 results**

1 Jonny Greer (Carrduff)/Dai Roberts (Carmarthen)	1:43:04.5
2 Daniel Sigurdarson (Iceland)/Asta Sigurdardottir (Iceland)	1:46:00.4
3 David Bogie (Dumfries)/Kevin Rae (Hawick)	1:52:29.2
4 Peter Horsey (Mombasa)/Moses Matovu (Kampala)	1:54:31.1

#### **Retirements**

SS1 Owen Murphy (Cork)/James O'Brien (Cork)	Clutch
SS6 Alastair Fisher (Trillick)/Rory Kennedy (Letterkenny)	Transmission

#### **Series standings**

##### Drivers

- 1 Jonny Greer 20
- 2 Daniel Sigurdarson 18
- 3 David Bogie 16
- 4 Peter Horsey 15

##### Co-drivers

- 1 Dai Roberts 20
- 2 Asta Sigurdardottir 18
- 3 Kevin Rae 16

ENDS

#### **Photo caption**

Jonny Greer and co-driver Dai Roberts recorded their first ever Mitsubishi Ralliart Evolution Challenge victory this weekend, when they won the opening round of the UK series on the Bulldog International Rally of North Wales by a convincing margin (*copyright free image*).

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