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EVOLUTION CHALLENGE
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Press Information

MITSUBISHI RALLIART EVOLUTION CHALLENGE IRELAND ROUNDS 1 & 2 PREVIEW



- Circuit of Ireland – 3rd & 4th April 2010
- Evolution Challenge gets set to start its third season in Ireland.
- Both former Champions return to defend their titles.
- Quality field destined to provide a close battle for top places.
- Mitsubishi series represents over half Class N4 entry.

1st April 2010

The Mitsubishi Ralliart Evolution Challenge Ireland kicks off its third consecutive season this weekend with the Circuit of Ireland Rally, the event hosting round one on Saturday and round two on Sunday of the high-profile one-make series for Group N (Production Class) Lancer Evolutions.

This season sees the Evolution Challenge feature eight rounds over six top-quality asphalt rallies, with a double-header taking place at the beginning and end of the season. Series organisers are delighted to report that, even though details for the championship were released later than anticipated due to an issue that delayed final sign-off of the regulations, registrations are up on last year.

Last year's Champion Driver Neil McCance, with co-driver Sean Ferris, will be making a return to the Mitsubishi Championship and is therefore aiming to defend his title. For McCance, this will be his seventh consecutive season in the Evolution Challenge, having previously contested the UK-based series from 2004 to 2008.

Also returning to the Evo Challenge fold is 2008 Champion Driver Brendan Cumiskey. Having only entered two rounds last year, the Dundalk based businessman hopes that more outings will be on the cards for this season, especially if he and co-driver Conor Foley can post a good result this weekend on roads that are relatively local.

Making his Mitsubishi series debut is Sam Moffett. Although this is his first full season in a four-wheel drive car, he and co-driver James O'Reilly will be a crew to look out for and may well be in with a shot of a podium finish this weekend. After a great showing last year, John McGlaughlin/Crawford Henderson are embarking on a full season this time and, with a brand new Evo IX at their disposal, they are another crew who will be mounting a serious assault for the title in 2010.

Returning to the Challenge for his third season is Stanley Ballentine. He will again be partnered by 2009 Champion Co-driver Donnacha O'Callaghan who is eager to retain his hard-earned title.

Other previous Evo Challenge competitors coming back for more are Willie Mavitty, who showed great potential with a series of impressive runs last year and Geoff McMahon/Robert Graham who are hoping to compete in more rallies this season, whilst there is no doubting the commitment of Galway-born Liam Egan, who will again be making the trip from his current home in New York to compete this year.

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The Circuit of Ireland is understood to be the second-oldest rally in the world, with many great names listed on its 79-year roll-of-honour. In keeping with tradition, this year's event will span the north-south border, starting in Dundalk town centre on Easter Saturday at midday and featuring nine stages, including an 18-mile night-time run before the overnight halt. A further six stages follow on Sunday and, after covering a total of 140 competitive miles over both days, the rally finishes in Newry at 4.30 pm.

As announced recently, for the first time this season, the winner of the Evolution Challenge in each of the three countries it takes place, 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.

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

Evolution Challenge entries

- 11 Neil McCance (Comber)/Sean Ferris (Omagh)
- 12 John McGlaughlin (Cookstown)/Crawford Henderson (Magherafelt)
- 14 Brendan Cumiskey (Dundalk)/Conor Foley (Ballinode)
- 17 Sam Moffett (Monaghan)/James O'Reilly
- 29 Stanley Ballentine (Strabane)/Donnacha O'Callaghan (Mallow)
- 30 Geoff McMahon (Armagh)/Robert Graham (Armagh)
- 32 Willie Mavitty (Eniskillen)/Brian Daniels
- 36 Liam Egan (New York)/Peter Ward (Maghera)

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Photo

2009 Mitsubishi Ralliart Evolution Challenge Ireland Champion Driver Neil McCance will start the defence of his title this weekend when he kicks off the season with the Circuit of Ireland Rally (*copyright free image*).