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Press Information

MITSUBISHI RALLIART EVOLUTION CHALLENGE UK ROUND SIX REPORT

- Swansea Bay Rally - 18th July 2009.
- Barry takes fifth victory of the season and clinches title with two rounds remaining.
- Sigurdarson denied maiden Evo Challenge victory on final stage by 1.1 seconds.
- Elsmore side-lined by transmission woes.



20th July 2009

It was a perfect weekend for Daniel Barry and co-driver Martin Brady, when they crossed the finish line of the Swansea Bay Rally to record their fifth Mitsubishi Ralliart Evolution Challenge victory of the season and, in doing so, put themselves in an unassailable position for the title.

The new Champions were kept honest all day by Icelandic Rally Champion Daniel Sigurdarson, with his co-driver on this occasion, Andrew Sankey. They led the Evo Challenge for most of the rally, only to be passed on the final stage by Barry/Brady who stopped the clocks to win by a slender 1.1 seconds.

With the absence of their main rivals Simon Hughes/Craig Parry and a reduced Evo Challenge field, all Barry and Brady had to do was finish. But in rallying it's never that easy and they admitted to a little nervousness before the start outside the Village Hotel in Swansea's Dockland area.

The event comprised four of the stages which are regularly used for the Wales Rally GB, each run twice during the day to give a total competitive distance of 60-miles. The first two saw Sigurdarson/Sankey take the lead by 7.1 seconds, Barry reporting that he wasn't concentrating hard enough on Brady's pace-notes and consequently losing time.

But for Nik Elsmore/Craig Drew, stage two was to be as far as they went. Half-way through SS1 they heard some strange noises coming from their car's gearbox and then lost second gear. They therefore decided to nurse the car through SS2 and see if their team could fix the problem at the following service halt, but just 200 yards from the end of the stage, the car came to a halt with no drive at all.

After trying all they could to get their Evo moving again, they frustratingly accepted their fate, further inspection revealing an oil leak, which had eventually led to a complete seizure.

Having gathered his thoughts, Barry was now listening to his co-driver's instructions and he and Brady went ahead on SS3 by 3.3 seconds, Sigurdarson reporting that the stage had not flowed well for him and Sankey.

With rally organisers cancelling SS4 due to hold-ups, it was now down to the remaining four afternoon's stages. Knowing that the Evo Challenge title was now within his grasp, Barry's team issued strict instructions to get to the finish. With Barry's quest for the title firmly in his sights, stage five saw Sigurdarson/Sankey re-take the lead, the Icelandic driver getting to grips with his new Evo X as every mile clicked-by.

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As has become traditional in the Evolution Challenge, it all came down to the final stage and as the two Mitsubishi crews they lined up at the start of SS8 the gap was down to just 3.1 seconds in favour of Sigurdarson/Sankey. Unable to resist a last-stage push, the Irishmen emerged from Rhonnda Forest ahead by just 1.1 seconds and, in doing so, recorded their fifth Evo Challenge win in six events.

This result also meant that Barry and Brady are now uncatchable in the race for the title and have amassed enough points to be crowned 2009 Evolution Challenge Champions. At the finish a delighted - and relieved - Daniel Barry said:

“All of us in the team have been working towards this moment for the past three years and I am over the moon that we’re now Evo Challenge Champions. Although we’ve wrapped up the title with two rounds to go it’s not been easy and sometimes, like today, it’s very close, which make the victory feel even better, although I have to say, it hasn’t quite sunk in yet.”

Although having clinched the title before the end of the season, Barry has confirmed he still intends to compete in the remaining two Evo Challenge rounds, the next being the Antrim-based Todds Leap Ulster Rally, which takes place on 21st & 22nd August.

The 2009 Mitsubishi Ralliart Evolution Challenge is supported by Mitsubishi Motors UK, Ralliart, Pirelli tyres, Sunoco fuels, JR Motorsports, Speedline Corse wheels, Carbone Lorraine brakes, Walkinshaw Performance, Sparco racewear and PIAA lights - who sponsor the junior award for under 25-year old drivers.

Mitsubishi Ralliart Evolution Challenge entries - in start number order

Round six results

- 1 Daniel Barry (Enniskerry)/Martin Brady (Navan) 51:15.5
- 2 Daniel Sigurdarson (Iceland)/Andrew Sankey (Ludlow) 51:16.6

Retirements

SS2 Nik Elsmore (Coleford)/Craig Drew (Bream) – Gearbox

Championship positions after round six

Drivers

1	Daniel Barry	70
2	Simon Hughes	50
3	Nik Elsmore	39
4	Owen Murphy	29
5	Alan Carmichael	18
7	Daniel Sigurdarson	17
6	Andreas Magnusson	8
8	Neil Armstrong	4

Co-drivers

1	Martin Brady	70
2	Craig Parry	40
3	Craig Drew	39
4	Dai Roberts	29
5	Ivor Lamont	18
6	Patrick Walsh	10
7	Henrik Hulterkog	8
8	Isak Gudjonsson	7
9	Max Ferri	4

ENDS

Photo: Daniel Barry and co-driver Martin Brady recorded their fifth Evolution Challenge victory of the season on round six, the Swansea Bay Rally and, in doing so, put themselves in an unassailable lead for the 2009 title with two rounds still to go (*copyright free image*).

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