



### **Rally Team Scotland Claims Season Best Result**

Rally Team Scotland came away with its best result of the year after the crew of John MacCrone and Stuart Loudon put in a relatively trouble-free run on the fourth round of the MSA British Rally Championship - the Rally Isle of Man. With a steady approach and consistent performance over the two-day event, they finished 13th overall and second in the Fiesta Sport Trophy category.

The classic event is one of the longest, and most demanding rounds of the series and the Scots approached it with caution. Local knowledge counts for a lot on the island. Its closed, public road special stages are made up of fast, double-width roads and a myriad of narrow, bumpy country lanes – and experience of the Isle of Man is a must before any challenge for success can be contemplated.

This was 20-year-old MacCrone's first attempt on the island and it's roads are so testing that even to just finish all 21 stages is seen to be an achievement. The high-speed stages and famous jumps and junctions have fans flocking to the island to catch a glimpse of the stars in action.

Rally Isle of Man was based at the TT Grandstand in Douglas and was the second of three consecutive Tarmac events. MacCrone and Loudon had prepared well for the rally, knowing that accurate pacenotes would provide vital assistance to their quest.

When the event started on Friday morning, the pair had planned to settle into a comfortable rhythm and build the speed up during the weekend. Finishing all the stages was the main aim as it would provide essential Tarmac experience for the next championship round in Northern Ireland. After a short burst through the opening stage in Douglas, the real action got underway and MacCrone set seventh fastest time in the R2 class on the first main stage.

His little Palletforce-backed Ford Fiesta R2 soon got into the groove, though, and he notched up fourth fastest times on stages eight and ten. Road conditions were changing rapidly and MacCrone had to contest with making last minute tyre choices as rain showers played havoc with the quickly-drying road surface. The day ended with two runs through the exciting Castletown spectator stage and the 11.6 miles of West

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Baldwin, and MacCrone was looking good as he ended the day in 12th position overall.

Day two had a mixed start – another fourth placed stage time on stage 14 The Cronk was followed by a pair of punctures on stages 15 and 16. Because both tests were short, MacCrone elected to drive on the puncture each time and dropped just over a minute in total with time loss. But, as the day went on, he was getting into his stride and seemed to prefer the wetter conditions on the island. The day culminated with an impressive time on stage 18 Corlea which was good enough for third in R2 and 10th overall and helped him claw back some of the day's earlier dropped time.

However, on the last stage, MacCrone was quickly reminded of the perils of Manx rallying when he clipped a kerb at a square right junction and the TSL Contractors-supported Fiesta was pitched over onto its side at low speed. With the help of some quick-reacting spectators he was soon on his way and happy to safely finish his first outing on the island. After 153 miles of high-speed competition, and probably the longest event of MacCrone's short career, he delivered Rally Team Scotland's best finish to date and secured another podium in the Fiesta Sport Trophy.

But the result will also provide important Tarmac experience and confidence for the team as they head back across the Irish Sea to take on International Rally Northern Ireland on 20-21 August.

John MacCrone said, "It's great to have finished the event and even better that it's been our best overall result so far this year. I was happy with the times we set, especially when the roads were wet and I was able to step up my performance during the weekend. But one of the biggest things I've taken from the rally is the importance of the pre-event recce. On stages that are technical and fast like these, its vital to have a consistent level of information in the pacenotes – and that all starts on the recce. We've got some areas for improvement on the next round."

#### Ends

Note to editors: Rally Team Scotland is backed by main-sponsor Palletforce and a series of important team partners. Palletforce is a UK and European palletised distribution network and has built a unique member-owned network of 88 haulage companies, which work together to offer cost effective and environmentally efficient distribution for many major brands and high street retailers.

Attached image courtesy of Jakob Ebrey Photography. Media Contact: Glenn Patterson e: [glenn@reallycleverpr.com](mailto:glenn@reallycleverpr.com) t: 07872 470115

