



Alastair's Amazing Circuit of Ireland Drive!

For Alastair Fisher and co-driver Marshall Clarke the 2010 Circuit of Ireland Rally was a fantastic weekend of rallying. Their third place overall finish only tells part of the story, as they led the rally outright for seven stages and Alastair now lies second overall in the Irish Tarmac Championship.

The two day event kicked off with a ceremonial start in Dundalk, before tackling nine tough stages in the Newry and Banbridge area, including an 18 mile night time stage. *"We started off with two good runs on the opening two stages. It just took a mile for Marshall and I to gel, and then we were flying. When the rain came for the second loop of stages we were on the pace."*

Indeed by stage 4, Alastair had moved into second place overall behind the World Rally Car of Tim McNulty, but by stage 5 he was leading the rally now 8 seconds up on Derek McGarrity's Subaru WRC car. On stage 5 Alastair set his first overall fastest time of the rally, followed by two more on stages 6 and 8. It was a truly impressive performance in the lesser powered Group N machine. Added to this, three second fastest times throughout the weekend and three third fastest times, it proved the pace of the young Co. Tyrone charger and his Gerry McGarrity prepared Mitsubishi Evo 9.

Alastair ended the first day of the Circuit of Ireland Rally 13 seconds in the lead from Derek McGarrity, with the WRC Focus of Gareth MacHale third, and Tim McNulty fourth following a puncture. *"We had clean runs through the first two evening tests, and then on the final 18 miler we maintained a steady pace. It was so hard to pick your braking points and see the mud in the dark, but we got through it with a good enough time."*

Day two, Sunday and six stages in the Castleblayney area, and blue skies dawned meaning dry roads for the rally leader. *"I suppose I was praying for rain! On the first stage out we dropped a couple of seconds when we run wide and got some mud stuck in the wheel, causing a vibration. On stage 11 we held onto the lead, but the conditions weren't as good for us, and on the next test we dropped to second after collecting a puncture. We simply under-steered wide and clipped a rock and drove about four miles on the flat."* At this point Gareth MacHale closed in to snatch second, leaving Alastair a superb third overall at the rally finish.

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"It was a tough rally, with challenging stages, and I enjoyed it very much. The rally ran well, and there was a good atmosphere. It was encouraging to see good crowds of spectators on the stages."

The result was fantastic for the team, and a great follow up from the opening round Galway fourth place. "Gerry, Keith and Badger as always put in a fantastic effort throughout the week to get the car sorted and this result is for them also. As for Marshall on the notes, he was just brilliant it was like we had been rallying together for years".

This result also moves Alastair into the lead of class 5 in the Irish Tarmac Championship, with the next round in Killarney on May Bank Holiday weekend.

The next big event for the team is the Pirelli International, round two of the British Rally Championship.



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