

Successful Launch of 2018 Season at Ingliston

A sun drenched Royal Highland Centre at Ingliston was the scene for Round 1 of the **2018 Junior 1000 Ecosse Challenge** on Sunday 25th March. The **DCC Junior Stages**, supported by WESTON TRANSPORT, was run by Dunfermline Car Club who put on an event that was a real credit to the organisers and their associates and the 12 Junior 1000 crews who crossed the startline loved it. Joining 9 Scottish crews were 2 young drivers from Northern Ireland and 1 from Lancaster, England.

From the 9am start it was **Lewis Haining/George Myatt (Skoda Citigo)** and **Johnnie Mackay/Gordon Reid (Suzuki Alto)** who set a blistering pace out front and after 4 stages they were tied on times with Irish guest driver **Sam Adams/Andrew Bushe (Skoda Citigo)** hanging in there in third. After stage 6, Mackay had gained a 5 second lead over Haining but Haining reduced this to 3 seconds in stage 7. The top podium position was all down to the final stage and a big push from Haining saw him reduce the gap to zero - a tie. And the tie breaker went in favour of Haining who was fastest over the very first stage. It was an epic battle and Mackay graciously congratulated his friend Haining on the victory. Adams held onto third, 36 seconds back to take a podium place and a trophy back across the Irish Sea.

Coming home in fourth place was Andrew Blackwood/Richard Stewart (Citroen C1) who leapfrogged English guest driver Riley Banks/Steven Brown (Peugeot 107) and Ollie Hunter/Tom Hynd (Peugeot 107) to move from sixth place in that last stage. Once again it was a tie breaker call between Blackwood and Banks with Hunter 7 seconds back. This had been another exciting competition to watch but it was Blackwood who kept his cool and put in a strong time on that final stage.

In only his second rally in his trusty and hard working Nissan Micra, Fraser Anderson/Ian McRae took 7th place. They were also the highest placed pre 2003 car and scored maximum points in this category.

In 8th place was the beautiful blue with pink flashes Skoda Citigo of Amy McCubbin. This would be the first outing for this all lady team with very experienced driver and co-driver Jane Nicol joining for 2018. They had a very close battle with Anderson all day for 7th place but it was Anderson who took it in the end.

9th and 10th places were taken by first timers – both in Nissan Micras. Jack Hall/Robin Nicolson took 9th. After a cautious start, Hall picked up the pace during the day, and apart from a short panic when the Micra refused to start before stage 7 – when members from 3 other teams pounced upon it and coaxed it back into life - the team enjoyed a valuable learning day. Erica Winning/Mark Runciman took 10th place. Erica has become the 3rd lady driver in our Championship and after watching the other 2 having a ball in 2017, she was finally out there doing it herself. She also took a very cautious approach but did admit to a couple of “wee” spins – just to keep Runciman on the ball!! But did she enjoy it – you bet she did.

10 cars finished the rally with Irish crew Marcus McElwee/John Henderson (Citroen C1) retiring with gearbox failure and Alice Paterson (Peugeot 107) with a blown engine - both in stage 5.

At the end, everybody agreed that this had been a fitting start to what looks like being a great season ahead with 3 more Scottish drivers expected to join before the next event.

The next outing will be at Kames Motorsport Complex in East Ayrshire on 22nd April.



Haining/Myatt



Mackay/Reid



Adams/Bushe



Top 3 Overall



Top 3 Ecosse Challenge Drivers

