

**MOFFETT MAKES IT FOUR FROM FOUR WITH CARLOW RALLY WIN** Monaghan's Josh Moffett (Hyundai i20 R5) maintained his dominance of the Triton Showers-backed Motorsport Ireland National Rally Championship courtesy of an emphatic victory in the Sheehy Motor Group Carlow Rally that marked the halfway point of the eight round series. It was Moffett's fourth straight win of the national campaign. Co-driven by Limerick's Keith Moriarty, he finished a minute and 10.2 seconds ahead of Armagh's Darren Gass and his Fermanagh co-driver Barry McNulty, who netted the "Power Stage" bonus point for fastest time on the final stage. Donegal's Declan Boyle and Monaghan's James O'Reilly (VW Polo GTi R5) were a mere 0.8 of a second behind in third.

Donegal's Kevin Eves/Chris Melly (Toyota Corolla) won the modified category and netted fifth overall while Limerick's Ed O'Callaghan and his Monaghan co-driver Kaine Treanor (Ford Escort) came out on top in the O'Brien Cement Mk. II Challenge, they were eighth overall.

Moffett was a whopping 18.4 seconds quicker than the opposition on the 19.10 kilometre Drumfea stage, the first of the day's six stages that, according to most of the drivers, was very gravelly. Boyle (VW Polo GTi R5) was next - 3.6 seconds ahead of the Citroen C3 of Darren Gass with Donegal's Kevin Eves (Toyota Corolla) a fine fourth and ahead of Robert Barrable (Ford Fiesta Rally 2) and Gary Kiernan (Ford Escort). Top local driver David Condell crashed his Ford Escort and blocked the stage for a number of competitors, all of whom received the time of Ed O'Callaghan (Escort), who was the last competing car to have traversed the stage prior to Condell's accident.

Moffett also topped the time sheets for the second stage and arrived at the Tullow service park with a lead of 30.4 seconds. Gass admitted he had no answer to Moffett's pace as Eves slotted his Toyota Corolla into third overall with a strong performance, the Donegal driver pushing hard all through, particularly on the second stage.

Barrable in a late change to a Fiesta Rally 2 was four tenths of a second further behind and 39.6 seconds adrift of rally leader Moffett. Fifth placed Declan Boyle spun on the second stage but was content that he was gradually increasing his pace. Another former champion Peadar Hurson (Fiesta WRC) occupied sixth on what was his first outing since October 2021. Tim McNulty and Enda O'Brien were next on the leaderboard, both untroubled, the latter reckoned the opening stage knocked his confidence.

The top ten also featured the Toyota Starlet of Jason Black and Ed O'Callaghan but Gary Kiernan retired his Escort with a broken differential.

Tyrone's Ryan Loughran (Ford Escort), with the number one decals on the side of his Ford Escort, had a torrid opening with air escaping from the wheels of his car. Three were detected prior to leaving for the opening stage but the other wheel deflated and he plummeted to 144th.

On the repeat of both stages, Moffett went 52.2 seconds ahead, he said, "We are just doing our own thing, keeping it clean and tidy." Although Gass was second, both Barrable and Boyle were very much in the frame, Barrable was 11.3 seconds behind Gass and Boyle was only 1.1 seconds further back. Barrable was still learning the vagaries of the Dom Buckley hired Fiesta Rally 2 and Boyle was very content to be on an upward curve in terms of his performance in his new VW Polo GTi R5.

Meanwhile Eves occupied fifth from the VW Polo GTi R5 of Enda O'Brien. Tim McNulty retired his Fiesta R5 when it was damaged after he braked too late and hit a chicane bale. There was collateral damage for Hurson, who caught up with McNulty's car and a stone cracked the windscreen of his Fiesta WRC. In the MkII Challenge, Ed O'Callaghan was some 25 seconds ahead of Monaghan's Gary McPhillips with Cavan's Jonny Pringle, on his first rally in three years, occupying third in the category.

Moffett went on to claim his fourth win from as many outings in the series and while victory was never in doubt, the chase for second went down to the wire. On the penultimate stage,

Boyle had moved into second - 4.7 seconds ahead of Gass, however, the Armagh ace stormed through the final stage and edged out Boyle by 0.8 of a second, he also took a bonus point for the fastest time on the Power Stage. Barrable was fourth from top two wheel drive exponent Eves and O'Brien's VW Polo GTi R5.

Hurson was seventh on his first national outing of the season. O'Callaghan, who was eighth, moves into the lead of the Mk2 Trophy series, he also won the Carlow Motor Club's O'Brien Cement MKII Challenge.

Donegal's Kevin Gallagher (Darrian T90 GTR) and Armagh's Jason Black (Toyota Starlet) completed the top ten, the latter winning Class 13.

Elsewhere, Maynooth's Paul Barrett (Fiesta R5) who was in the top ten after the opening stage, finished twelfth overall. Former national event winner, Macclesfield's Jim Harrison, who last competed in Carlow in 2007 and won several Irish national rallies from 2002 to 2007 debuted a Skoda Fabia R5. Co-driven by Limerick's Anthony Nestor, he was making steady progress on his debut and was in the top twenty prior to the final stage, however, he couldn't avoid a rock that was strewn on the road and he avoided a major moment before finishing twenty-fifth.

1. Josh Moffett/Keith Moriarty (Hyundai i20 R5) 55m. 20.9s.
2. Darren Gass/Noel O'Sullivan (Citroen C3 Rally2)+1m. 10.2s
3. Declan Boyle/James O'Reilly (Ford Fiesta WRC)+1m. 11.0s
4. Robert Barrable/Paddy Robinson (VW Polo GTi R5)+1m. 16.8s
5. Kevin Eves/Chris Melly (Toyota Corolla) +1m. 42.4s.
6. Enda O'Brien/John Butler ( VW Polo GTi R5)+2m. 21.7s.
7. Peadar Hurson/Damien Connolly ( Ford Fiesta WRC)+ 2m. 44.5s.
8. Ed O'Callaghan/Kaine Treanor (Ford Escort)+2m. 55.6s
9. Kevin Gallagher/Ryan Moore (Darrian T90 GTR)+ 3m. 05.6s
10. Jason Black/Karl Egan (Toyota Starlet)+3m. 06.0s.

Championship Positions (Provisional) after Round 4: 1. Josh Moffett 81points; 2. Darren Gass 66pts; 3. Robert Barrable 47pts.

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