



2018 Junior 1000 Ecosse Challenge

The 2018 Junior Ecosse Challenge year kicked off with Welcome, training day and driving test day at Knockhill back in March. It was a return of 6 previous competitors joined by 6 novice competitors. Our numbers were set at 12 and stayed that way throughout the year with a few 1 off guest appearances over the course of the championship.

The championship covered 8 rallies with each of the competitors taking their best 6 scores. The first round was held at Ingliston where the competition was high and set the scene for the remainder of the year. Lewis Haining and Johnnie Mackay tied for time after 8 stages! Haining taking the top step of the podium due to the fastest time on the first stage.

The second round of the championship was held at EACC Kames circuit. All thought it was to be a repeat of Ingliston with Haining and Mackay trading stage times however both came up against it with mechanical issues. Peter Beaton went on to win the event from Lewis Winder. After 16 stages it was very close again with only 3 seconds splitting the two of them. Andrew Blackwood getting his score up by taking a second 3rd place.

Mechanical issues at Kames for several competitors highlighted a great community spirit which continued throughout the year. Drivers all coming together, all urging each other on and being there for each other when things were not going well. The same went for the teams and parents. If there was a mechanical issue it was not long before all the teams were working together to ensure a fix and get the youngster back out for the next stage.

Consistent driving from Haining, Mackay and Blackwood kept them at the top places for the rest of the championship. Novice driver Ollie Hunter did take top spot at Kames circuit in September and saw him clinch the Novice title.

A common theme at all the events this year was the overall wins only being taken with a few seconds at the last stage. Making for some very close and exciting finishes.

Throughout the year the drivers also took part in 3 training days. The training days were set out as a mixture of 1 to 1 driving tuition as well as some classroom sessions. Topics covered were braking, cornering, the friction circle, basic fitness, anti-doping and data logging of cars (anything F1 can do we can match on a reduced budget!).

Although the top places were all filled with experienced competitors in their 3rd year of the program there was no shortage of commitment from the novice drivers further

down the field. Confidence behind the wheel was growing and the stage times were reflecting that.

On to the last event of the year and it was off to join our English partners at Cadwell park raceway. Andrew Blackwood had already done enough to secure 3rd place in the championship but it was a head to head battle between Lewis Haining and Johnnie Mackay for the championship title.

Despite problems for both on the first stage Haining and Mackay went on trading top times in the Ecosse side of the event all day. Haining edged ahead but with a spin on the penultimate stage meant the championship would be decided in the last stage with only 2 seconds splitting the two. Haining took the last stage and the time was 6 seconds between them.

The championship could not have finished any closer! A fitting finish to what has been a fantastic year of competition.

Lewis Haining and codriver George Myatt taking the championship win, Johnnie Mackay and codriver Gordon Reid taking second place with Andrew Blackwood filling the last place on the championship podium.

The top 3 drivers along with others now move on to senior rallying. We wish them well and look forward to following their progress. Whatever path all the youngsters take motorsport will be in good competition going forward.

Our focus now turns to next year. Recruitment is well under way and hopefully we will be welcoming some new faces to the sport in 2019.

Stuart Sheridan
Coordinator
J1000 Ecosse Challenge

