**Josh Moffett masters Monaghan to give Citroen first Irish win**

The pre-event hype lived up to expectations on Sunday’s Monaghan Rally, round two of the Triton Showers Motorsport Ireland National Rally Championship.

Sibling rivalry was taken to another level as brothers Josh and Sam each put on epic performances to secure a Moffett one-two on their home rally,

Younger brother Josh and co-driver Keith Moriarty headed the field as the 2022 winner, but it was first blood to Sam who took the opening Sheetrim test by 1.6 seconds.

On the second stage, the tables were turned and it was Josh who was now ahead, leading by 1.4 seconds after taking the fastest time by three seconds.

After the third stage and heading to the service, Josh held a 1.7 second advantage after sneaking a few more tenths from his older brother.

They were just 1.1 seconds clear of Sam and co-driver James O’Reilly after six of the day’s nine stages.

But Josh really upped the pace over the final loop and eventually won the rally by 11 seconds.

The result allowed the Citroen C3 Rally2 drivers Josh Moffett and Keith Moriarty to get their Triton Showers Motorsport Ireland National Rally Championship back on track after a non-finish in Mayo in March.

It was the first win for a Citroen C3 Rally2 on a Motorsport Ireland-sanctioned rally.

“All-round it has been a great day and we are getting more and more comfortable with the car,” said Josh at the finish ramp. “It gets our championship back on track too, so all good.”

However, Sam and co-driver James O’Reilly maintain the championship lead after his win in Mayo and runner-up position on home territory.

“We pushed as hard as we could all day, we had a great battle, nip and tuck, Josh went very hard over the last three stages, and so did we, we didn’t give up,” said Sam.

Fancied frontrunners Daniel Cronin and Donnchadh Burke were in the mix for much of the early part of the rally. The Volkswagen Polo R5 crew were third overall after stage four but crashed out on the fifth test near Emyvale.

This promoted the Skoda Fabia R5 crew of Eddie Doherty and Tom Murphy to third place – their second such finish in as many national rallies this year.

They are now second in the championship’s overall standings.

“The stages were class, my first time in Monaghan and it lived up to the hype, fair play to the motor club for putting on a top class event.”

Jason Mitchell and Paddy McCrudden had a brilliant run to fourth and they finished just ahead of Aidan Wray and Niall Burns – both crews in Volkswagen Polos. Mitchell was just 3.9 seconds from Doherty.

Both crews enjoyed a day-long battle with Mitchell coming good by just 6.1 seconds at the finish.

Gary Keirnan and John McCabe continue to get more accustomed to their recently acquired Ford Fiesta R5.

“I am letting the car slide more around the road,” said the Cavan man who finished sixth overall.

The Modified is always electric in Monaghan and this year’s offering served up another belter.

Local man Daniel McKenna and his Mayo co-driver Andrew Greenan set some sensational times all day on their Ford EscortMk2.

They showed why they were previous winners of McKenna’s local rally by finishing seventh overall.

His day was not without incident, he damaged the car’s exhaust system early in the rally, and it caused the engine to be down on power.

“I don’t know how it happened,” he said. “There were a lot of rocks pulled out by the earlier cars but fair play to my team around me who got it sorted in service.

Local men and former home rally winners Dessie Keenan and Jason McKenna set the early modified pace but a chronic misfire forced them to miss stage three.

While they did re-join under Super Rally their challenge for the rally was over.

The Darrian GT90 of Kevin Gallagher and Ger Conway were on a mission over the later stages to take second place. They were just 1.8 seconds off McKenna at the end.

As McKenna was not registered for the Triton Showers Motorsport Ireland National Rally Championship the Donegal -Kerry crew took top modified championship points.

Damien Tourish and Domhnall McAlaney kept McKenna and Gallagher honest all day and just 0.1 of a second separated Gallagher and Tourish at the finish ramp outside the Four Seasons Hotel on Sunday evening.

The top ten was completed by Declan Boyle from County Donegal.

Former National Rally Champion Boyle and co-driver Patrick Walsh were back behind the wheel of a Ford Fiesta after a few events in a Citroen C3 and seemed to get a better handle on his latest machine on his way to tenth.

Son Michael and co-driver Dermot McCaffery were just 1.9 seconds behind in their Polo to record an 11th-place finish.

Local men David Moffett (Toyota Starlet) and Gary McPhillips (Ford Escort) were 12th and 13th respectively after another tight battle – just 1.6 seconds the gap in the wind-up.

The top 15 was completed by Triton Showers man Paul Barrett in his Citroen and Jason Black in another Starlet.

Registered crew of Trevor Wilson and Paul Mulholland won the Historic section in their BMW M3 E30.

The Junior Rally was decided on a tie-break.

After nine stages neither Kyle McDaid nor Jason Wilkinson could be separated but McDaid got the nod as he was fastest on the final stage.

The championship moves to Birr, County Offaly for the third round on April 21 where Birr and District Motor Club host The Garahy Family Birr Stages Rally.