

26.10.17
News release

The dream is real (and seriously tough) for Maidstone star Slaughter

Maidstone rally driver James Slaughter is ready for the toughest test of his rally driving career when he starts Britain's round of the FIA World Rally Championship on the north Welsh coast this evening.

Slaughter went through his final preparations for Wales Rally GB with a test of his Ford Fiesta R5 this morning. With the event proper yet to start, the British Rally Championship (BRC) regular admitted he'd already had his eyes opened.

"We drive through the stages twice to make notes about the corners and the roads before the competition starts," explained Slaughter. "We've done this all year in the BRC, but it was much more arduous this week. We had so many roads and so many stages to get through – we were on the roads for 13 hours both days. That was a real step up from what we've been used to."

Focus and concentration are vital during the recce as a mistake made while making the notes will come back to haunt the drivers in the coming days.

"If I miscalculated the severity of a corner or missed a bump in the middle of a bend, that's bad at 50mph on the recce, but when you arrive there travelling, potentially, twice that speed, it's a very different matter. The recce has been hard work, a real eye-opener to what competition at the world level is all about.

"This morning's final test went well. I'm really happy with the car, MSL has done a great job. We've changed the set-up slightly, tuning the Fiesta to what we expect from the gravel roads tomorrow."

Friday is when the main competition gets underway with six stages and more than 70, flat-out miles to drive through the forests of mid-Wales.

"I turned 44 today," said James, "and this is one hell of a way to celebrate! This is going to be an incredible experience competing on the same roads as the best rally drivers in the world. And competing for three days in succession, it's going to be tough, but I'm really excited about it.

"One of the things I have to get used to is the rutted nature of the roads. We don't really get that in the BRC. And there's an awful lot of mud around in places. There's been a fair bit of rain earlier this week and that's made conditions really slippery. Some of the roads are incredibly treacherous; you touch the brakes and it's just like ice.

"My approach is about taking as much as I can from this experience, competing at a world level isn't an opportunity that comes along every day. In terms of a result, I'm looking around the top 15 in the WRC2 category, but there's real strength and depth in the field here. First and foremost, I want to get through the stages, get the experience and have a good time."

James' Wales Rally GB adventure starts with a short (0.92 miles), crowd pleasing Tir Prince stage tonight. Following that, the crews head back to service in Deeside before heading to the woods tomorrow (Friday).

Tomorrow is:

Friday October 27

James' day starts: 0800

James' day finishes: 2100

Number of stages: six

Competitive distance: 117.66km (73.11 miles)

Total distance: 514.55km (319.74 miles)

Longest stage: SS4/7 Hafren 35.14km (21.83 miles)

Shortest stage: SS3/6 Sweet Lamb 4.24km (2.63 miles)

Meet James...

Date of birth: 26.10.73

Lives: Maidstone

Co-driver: Niall Burns

First rally: Mid Wales Historic Stages, 2008

Rally starts: 27

About Dayinsure Wales Rally GB

October 26-29

Based: Deeside

Surface: gravel

Stages: 21

Competitive distance: 304.36km (189.12 miles)

Total distance: 1488.10km (924.70 miles)

Website: www.walesrallygb.com

Dayinsure Wales Rally GB itinerary

Thursday October 26

SS1 Visit Conwy Tir Prince 1.49km (0.92 miles) 1900

Friday October 27

SS2 Myherin 1 20.28km (12.60 miles) 1020

SS3 Sweet Lamb 1 4.24km (2.63 miles) 1100

SS4 Hafren 1 35.14km (21.83 miles) 1115

Remote tyre fitting zone, Newtown, 1253

SS5 Myherin 2 20.28km (12.60 miles) 1431

SS6 Sweet Lamb 2 4.24km (2.63 miles) 1511

SS7 Hafren 2 35.14km (21.83 miles) 1526

Parc Fermé 1951

Saturday October 28

SS8 Aberhirnant 1 13.91km (8.64 miles) 0755

SS9 Dyfnant 1 17.91km (11.12 miles) 0847

SS10 Gartheiniog 1 12.61km (7.83miles) 0959

SS11 Dyfi 1 25.86km (16.06 miles) 1028

SS12 Gartheiniog 2 12.61km (7.83miles) 1208

SS13 Dyfi 2 25.86km (16.06 miles) 1237

SS14 Cholmondeley Castle 1.80km (1.11 miles) 1548

Service Deeside 1637

SS15 Aberhirnant 2 13.91km (8.64 miles) 1855

SS16 Dyfnant 2 17.91km (11.12 miles) 1947

Parc Fermé 2213

Sunday October 29

SS17 Alwen 1 10.41km (6.46 miles) 0834

SS18 Brenig 1 6.43km (3.99 miles) 0908

SS19 Gwydir 7.49km (4.65 miles) 1006

SS20 Alwen 2 10.41km (6.46 miles) 1109

SS21 Brenig 2 6.43km (3.99 miles) 1218

Parc Fermé 1335

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