

28.10.17
News release

Slaughter battles on through toughest day in Wales

Maidstone's James Slaughter enjoyed another quick and consistent day of driving on Wales Rally GB and remains on target to reach the finish of his first ever World Rally Championship event. But only just.

A broken clutch on the day's final test left James nursing his Ford Fiesta R5 back to service at close to midnight, hoping the car would make it into the welcoming arms of the MSL team.

Saturday was the longest and toughest leg of the Deeside-based event with nine stages and almost 90 miles of flat-out driving in a day which lasted almost 20 hours.

Having already tackled the Sydney-Cape Town leg of the BT Global Challenge yacht race and taken on the world's best in the British Windsurf Association Championships, Slaughter is a man who knows all about endurance and world-class competition. But today tested even his resolve.

"That was a hard, hard day," he said. "Physically, it's a long day, we were up at five this morning after not much sleep and we won't be back to the hotel much before one [o'clock Sunday morning]. But on top of that, it's the constant mental challenge of competition: you get the adrenalin pumping and racing through your body as you go into the stage and then when you've finished, you calm down again.

"And then, just when it couldn't get any tougher, we went into the dark for the day's last two stages – and that challenge was on another level.

"Earlier in the day, everything had gone well for us. I was caught napping a bit on the first one this morning, but after that I was fully awake and pushing on. Like yesterday, the grip level was shockingly inconsistent, but I absolutely loved the Dyfnant test – that was absolutely brilliant.

"We had a bit of a scare on the stage when we got some smoke coming into the cockpit. We checked everything and could find no major problems, so we cracked on again. The times have been a bit mixed, but the focus now is very much on making the finish."

Arriving back in service tonight, Slaughter echoed the comments of the world's best drivers as he described the final two night stages.

"They were unreal," he said. "I haven't got much experience of driving in the dark, so that was really a jump into the deep end. When the fog and the mist came down, it was so, so disorientating. Obviously, you have to turn the big

lights off because they're bouncing back [off the fog] and then you're really driving blind and just committing to what the co-driver tells you.

"At times you're doing close to 100mph because the guy next to you tells you it's 200 metres to the next corner. It was a little bit crazy and then we had the problem with the clutch – for a while in there I didn't think we were going to make it out. That was a real scare, and the road section back to Deeside wasn't much fun!

"But now, it's time for bed, some sleep and one more day of this adventure tomorrow."

As well as giving the Fiesta a complete overhaul, the MSL team will fit a new clutch ahead of tomorrow's final day.

Weather:

Today: overcast with occasional rain and fog, temperatures ranging from 8-15 degrees

Tomorrow: similar to today with light drizzle expected and temperatures around 14 degrees

Tomorrow is:

Sunday October 29

James' day starts: 0800

James' day finishes: 1430

Number of stages: five

Competitive distance: 41.09km (25.53 miles)

Total distance: 245.20km (152.36 miles)

Longest stage: SS17/20 Alwen 10.41km (6.46 miles)

Shortest stage: SS18/21 Brenig 6.43km (3.99 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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