

Marty's stop, start, start, stop Sardinian adventure comes good

TigerRisk-backed driver Marty McCormack continued to flatten the learning curves which mark out his first season of World Rally Championship competition on this week's Rally Italia Sardegna.

The Northern Irishman showed great pace in his A-Style-run Fiesta R5 on the Sardinian event which finished in Alghero this afternoon. The only frustration was that he didn't get long enough behind the wheel of the car.

McCormack and co-driver David Moynihan missed out on their chance to drive some of the most anticipated stages of the season after the rally organisers were forced to cancel stages because of problems for other crews or through car trouble of their own.

A broken driveshaft ended McCormack's charge on Friday, while further transmission trouble meant an early bath on Saturday.

On Sunday, however, he was back on song and singing his way through the baking hot Sardinian stages. Never out of the top-10 WRC 2 times on the final day, the highlights for McCormack came in the last stage, where he was six seconds faster than Lorenzo Bertelli, the WRC 2 winner.

"The last day was great," he said. "We really got the chance to get out there and get stuck in to some stages. It was fantastic when everything came together and worked so well. The Hankook tyres worked a treat and the car didn't miss a beat through Sunday."

"That made the rest of the rally all the more frustrating. For two days, we'd had this great car, great Hankook tyres and some incredible roads to use them on – but we just weren't able to get a clean run."

The Italian island event was only McCormack's second ever competitive outing in a four-wheel drive rally car and the two-time British Junior Rally Champion says he can feel the improvements coming in his driving.

"Rallying is so much about experience," he said, "and, while we didn't even manage half the mileage we should have done in Sardinia, the time I spent in the car helped me tremendously. I can really feel everything coming to me now. Driving this kind of car is quite a different approach to anything I have done previously, so Italy was very positive from that perspective."

McCormack was classified 14th in WRC 2.