

29.02.15
News release

It's a Mirage (not a mirage) and Osian and the BRC are back

Osian Pryce and the British Rally Championship have turned a page.

The super-talented Welshman endured a year to forget in 2015; for the British Rally Championship, 2015 was the forgotten year.

Later this week, both are back in business.

Osian will drive a Mitsubishi Mirage R5, built and run by Spencer Sport, on this weekend's BRC season-opening Mid Wales Stages.

Osian has completed much of the Mitsubishi's early development mileage in Britain and tackled the Cambrian Rally at the end of last season (his progress was halted by a minor problem with the fuel tank) as part of that programme.

That autumn outing in north Wales somewhat typified a 2015 full of promise for Osian, with ultimately little to show in return. Osian only competed on five events last year, he retired from three and finished on the podium on the other two – third on Rally North Wales (beating a couple of World Rally Cars in his two-wheel drive Citroen) and second in the Junior WRC category of Rally Poland. They would have won, had it not been for a misfire on the second day in the Polish Lake District.

Osian was glad to see the end of last season. And he's delighted to see the start of the British Rally Championship.

The BRC – the UK's premier rally series, in which Osian has twice finished runner-up – was benched last year. Dwindling interest from teams and drivers led the governing body of British motorsport to take the decision to suspend it for a season. After 12 months' hard work, the BRC's back. And it's looking bigger and better than ever.

Some of the biggest teams in the UK have returned with a field full of cutting-edge four-wheel drive cars to do battle across some of Britain's best rallies. And the whole thing will be played out via better-than-ever television coverage on Channel 4 and BT Sport.

Osian and co-driver Dale Furniss will be at the heart of the action on round one, in their native Wales on Saturday and Sunday.

Pryce, who will test his brand new Mitsubishi Mirage R5 for the first time on Wednesday, said: "I've got to admit, I'm really excited to be competing again. Since we were second in the Junior World Rally Championship in Poland in the summer, we didn't do much in the second half of the season. We've really

been building towards this year, which I'm hoping will be a big one for Dale and I."

Beyond the opening round of the BRC, Osian is aiming to return to the World Rally Championship for a programme of European events starting in May.

"At the moment," Pryce added, "the British Rally Championship drive is for Mid Wales only. We've done a lot of testing in the Mirage with Spencer Sport and that's been great; working on the development of any car is such a valuable experience for a driver at my level. Obviously, I'd love to continue the association with the team, but we'll have to see what happens after this weekend."

Osian's no stranger to the Mid Wales, having tackled the event as a 19-year-old in 2012. He finished in the top 10 and trounced his front-wheel drive opposition in only his second event in a Citroen.

This week's only his second outing in the Mirage and he's hoping for a similar result.

"I have some knowledge of the stages," he said, "I've done the Hafren stage a few times, but not so much in Myherin. These are classic Welsh roads though – they're some of the best in the world and the chance to attack them in a turbocharged four-wheel drive car is fantastic.

"I'm also really pleased to be back for the rebirth of the BRC. There's been a lot of talk and anticipation building over the last 12 months, it's great to see it back and see it back with a good deal of momentum behind it."

Osian's Mitsubishi Mirage R5 will run in the National Rally Cup (NRC) this weekend. While he will be eligible for overall victory on the Mid Wales Stages, he will score points in the NRC element of the British series rather than the overall BRC.

The Mid Wales Stages starts from Newtown at 1815 on Saturday March 5. After two stages in the dark, the crews return for an overnight halt in Newtown before returning for four more tests on Sunday. The champagne finish will be in Newtown at 1445.

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About Osian Pryce

Date of birth: 24.02.93

Lives: Machynlleth

Co-driver: Dale Furniss

First rally: Rally Kurzeme (Latvia) August 2009 – 37th overall, eighth 2WD

British Rally Championship starts: 23

British Rally Championship event wins: 4

British Rally Championship results: 2nd (2013/14), 3rd (2012)

World Rally Championship starts: 5

World Rally Championship class wins: 1

Website: osianpryce.com

Media contact:

Sandra Evans

+44 7887 693993

sandra@wordspr.com

About the Mid Wales Stages

Date: March 05/06

Based: Newtown

Stages: 6

Competitive distance: 68.02 miles (109.46 kilometres)

Total distance: 233.25 miles (375.37 kilometres)

Website: www.midwalesstages.co.uk

Media contact:

Matt Cotton

07870 216931

matt@mcrmotorsportmedia.com

Editors' note

Images of Osian's liveried Mitsubishi Mirage R5 will be issued on Wednesday March 2.