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News release

### **Spitfire dream realised, Stuart delivers a result in Belgium**

Glasgow co-driver Stuart Loudon finished Saturday's Rally van Wervik sixth British crew home after a typically challenging 100mph run down the Belgian lanes.

Competing with fellow Scot Lawrence Whyte, Loudon brought his knowledge and experience of Belgian rallying to bear on the 18-year-old Aberdonian driver, who was making his debut on a Tarmac rally.

"Coming to an event like this one to do your first ever event on asphalt was a big deal for Lawrence, it's very different to competing on gravel," said Stuart. "But he did really, really well. We made great progress through the day and you can see the times were getting better and better. The two main areas he improved in were the braking distances and carrying the speed through the corners.

"That's one of the things which drivers can struggle with on asphalt; on the loose you're used to the car sliding much, much more, whereas here in Belgium it's about keeping the car as straight and smooth as possible. Lawrence learned plenty about that."

The Scotsmen were in Belgium in preparation for the next round of the British Rally Championship, the Ypres Rally (June 21-23), where family commitments rule Stuart out of the Ford Fiesta R5 co-driver's seat.

"It's a shame to miss Ypres," said Stuart, who enjoyed the Wervik format of three stages repeated four times. "I love rallying in Belgium. There's such enthusiasm, a great atmosphere and so much support out here for the sport. And this was a great event, we started at half eight in the morning and finished at half seven at night. The stages were all quite short and maybe not quite as technical as some of those Lawrence will find in Ypres, but it's been a really, really good day."

In fact, for Stuart, it was a really, really good week. He arrived by plane in Belgium, but the scheduled flight was nothing like the trip he made a couple of days before the start of the recce.

Seeing Dover's famous white cliffs from inside a Spitfire is something only a handful of people in the world can claim to have done. Stuart's among those people now.

"I got the chance of going in the Spitfire on my way down to Belgium and I jumped at it," said Stuart. "It was, undoubtedly, one of the most incredible experiences of my life.

“Taking off, even with the intercom on full, you can’t talk to the pilot at all. The noise from the engine was something else. But taking off in a Spitfire was completely surreal. We did some rolls and then the pilot asked if I wanted to try a loop-the-loop. I did it. It was astonishing and something I will never ever forget.

“How can you forget something like the Spitfire? It’s a 27-litre V12 – if they’d made flying versions of World Rally Cars, this 1948 model would have been the absolute best!”

### **Stuart Loudon media enquiries**

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**Stuart Loudon** is a semi-professional co-driver who has started 102 rallies, 20 of which are rounds of the World Rally Championship and one of which was with an Ashes-winning English cricketer. He makes biscuits in the family business when he’s not working towards his dream of becoming a factory co-driver in the WRC.

Stuart Loudon and Words PR work their socks off to make sure every last dot and detail of the document is 100 per cent accurate – but we can’t be responsible for any changes to the itinerary or stage distances.