

The Loudon-clear guide to... Rally Isle of Man

When Elfyn Evans and Craig Parry clinched the British Rally Championship title last time out on the Ulster, there must have been a few folk worried about the potential entertainment value of the final round.

Those people have clearly never visited the Isle of Man in September.

What's more, those same folk certainly hadn't counted on entries from Rally Finland podium finishers Craig Breen/Scott Martin and Manx legend and local hero Mark Higgins, who will be co-driven by Darren Garrod.

What might have been looking like a parade lap for the DMACK British Rally Championship pair is anything-but. This week's series finale has become one of the most eagerly anticipated and exciting rounds of what's been a sensational comeback year for the BRC.

Breen will drive the same DGM-run DS 3 R5 he used to win the Circuit of Ireland in April, while Higgins lines up alongside Evans in a second DMACK Ford Fiesta R5.

But don't be fooled into thinking it's going to be just those three at the sharp end. There's a season-long silver medal on offer here and a very long list of determined and capable crews chasing that runners-up spot.

Elsewhere in the series, Rob Duggan and Gerard Conway have already sealed the DMACK Junior BRC title in their Vauxhall Adam R2, but the National Rally Cup's still up for grabs with Mitsubishi Mirage driver Robert Blomberg needing a top-four finish to clinch that award.

The Isle of Man in September has long been the traditional season-closer to the British Rally Championship and we've seen some of the world's greatest drivers come here and electrify this island alive in the early autumn. This week will be no different.

### **The rally ahead...**

MSA British Rally Championship round 7/7

Date: September 15-17

Based: Douglas

Service: TT Grandstand, Douglas

Stages: 20

Competitive distance: 162.96 miles (262.24km)

Liaison distance: 271.01 miles (436.12km)

Total distance: 433.97 miles (698.37km)

Longest stage: Phildraw (SS5/19) 13.49 miles (21.70km)

Shortest stage: Villa Marina (SS1) 0.9 miles (1.44km)

Sunrise: 0650

Sunset: 1928

## **Itinerary**

Thursday September 15

SS1 Villa Marina 0.90 miles (1.44km) 1900

Service Grandstand 1912

SS2 5 Tons Bridge 4.84 miles (7.78km) 2018

SS3 Pond Road 11.50 miles (18.50km) 2036

Service Grandstand 2128

Friday September 16

SS4 Sloc 5.57 miles (8.96km) 0958

SS5 Phildraw 13.49 miles (21.70km) 1040

Service Grandstand 1114

SS6 Pond Road 2 11.50 miles (18.50km) 1238

SS7 Ravensdale 6.93 miles (11.15km) 1315

Service Grandstand 1356

SS8 Snuff the Wind 3.85 miles (6.19km) 1518

SS9 .179+ 13.48 miles (21.69km) 1539

Service 1626

SS10 Castletown Mooar 1.79 miles (2.88km) 1908

SS11 Castle-Rushen 4.82 miles (7.75km) 1920

SS12 Sloc 2 5.57 miles (8.96km) 1942

SS13 Dollagh 11.49 miles (18.49km) 2029

SS14 Ravensdale 2 6.93 miles (11.15km) 2054

Finish Grandstand 2135

Saturday September 17

SS15 5 Tons Bridge 2 4.84 miles (7.78km) 0938

SS16 Dollagh 2 11.49 miles (18.49km) 1001

Service Grandstand 1059

SS17 Snuff the Wind 2 3.85 miles (6.19km) 1218

SS18 .179+ 2 13.48 miles (21.69km) 1239

Service Grandstand 1326

SS19 Phildraw 2 13.49 miles (21.70km) 1446

SS20 Classic 13.15 miles (21.16km) 1547

Finish 1610

## **Top 10 entries**

1 Craig Breen/Scott Martin (Citroën DS 3 R5)

2 Elfyn Evans/Craig Parry (Ford Fiesta R5)

3 Mark Higgins/Darren Garrod (Ford Fiesta R5)

4 Fredrik Åhlin/Morten Abrahamsen (Ford Fiesta R5)

5 Tom Cave/James Morgan (Ford Fiesta R5)

6 David Bogie/James O'Reilly (Škoda Fabia R5)

7 Jonathan Greer/Kirsty Riddick (Citroën DS 3 R5)

8 Desi Henry/Liam Moynihan (Škoda Fabia R5)

9 Josh Moffett/John Rowan (Ford Fiesta R5)

10 Rhys Yates/Tom Woodburn (Ford Fiesta R5)

**Stuart Loudon's key stage:** SS2 5 Tons Bridge 4.84 miles (7.78km)

It might not be the longest stage of the event, but this first stage proper is going to be crucial for anybody with serious intentions on this rally. At less than a mile, the first stage is little more than a loosener, but this is one where being bang on the money and absolutely committed from the start can make you some time and give you the psychological edge over rivals – especially if the conditions are marginal with some fog or rain coming in.

**Stuart will be watching...** #3 Mark Higgins/Darren Garrod (Ford Fiesta R5)

It's got to be this time, hasn't it? We were all completely transfixed and totally ecstatic last time Mark was on the island and lapping the TT Course at a record average speed 128.730mph in that Subaru. Success might be a little bit harder to find this time around with such fierce competition, but the chances of a sixth Manx win will keep everybody rooting for Mark.

**Weather with you:**

There's rain forecast for the days leading up to the event, but Friday and Saturday could see a break in the weather with some sunshine. Equally, it could be glorious blue skies one minute, torrential rain the next and then thick fog; this is the Isle of Manx, fickle weather comes for free. Temperatures will be between 15 and 21 degrees.

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**Stuart's restaurant recommendation:**

14North, Douglas, Isle of Man IM1 4LE +44 1624664414

[www.14north.im](http://www.14north.im)

Simple aim of showcasing the finest produce the Isle of Man's farmers have to offer. Why not try the slow-cooked beef with mushroom ketchup and chips or the roasted cod with salt and vinegar crust? Booking advisable.

**Recent Rally Isle of Man winners:**

2004: Jonny Milner/Nicky Beech (Subaru Impreza WRC)

2005: Mark Higgins/Bryan Thomas (Ford Focus RS WRC 02)

2006: Eugene Donnelly/Paul Kiely (Toyota Corolla WRC)

2007: Eugene Donnelly/Paul Kiely (Subaru Impreza WRC)

2008: Mark Higgins/Rory Kennedy (Subaru Impreza WRX)

2009: Mark Higgins/Bryan Thomas (Subaru Impreza WRX)

2010: Keith Cronin/Barry McNulty (Subaru Impreza WRX)

2012: Steven Quine/Richard Skinner (Mitsubishi Lancer Evo VI)

2013: Arron Newby/Rob Fagg (Subaru Impreza WRX)

2014: Nigel Cammell/Michaela Cammell (Mitsubishi Lancer Evo IX)

## **MSA British Rally Championship stat centre**

Rounds run: 6

Mid Wales Stages (March 5), winners: Evans/Parry; Circuit of Ireland Rally (April 7-9), winners: Moffett/Rowan; Pirelli Carlisle Rally (April 30-May1), winners: Åhlin/Abrahamsen; RSAC Scottish Rally (June 25), winners: Evans/Parry; Nicky Grist Stages (July 9-10), winners: Evans/Parry, Ulster Rally (August 19-20), winners: Evans/Parry.

Stages completed: 64

Accumulated winning time: 8h30m32.3s

Accumulated competitive distance completed: 550.58 miles (886.05km)

Accumulated liaison distance completed: 1132.02 miles (1821.78km)

Accumulated total distance completed: 1682.60 miles (2707.84km)

Longest stage of the season so far: Chirdonhead 16.15 miles (25.84km, Pirelli Carlisle Rally)

Shortest stage of the season so far: Tank 4.36 miles (7.01km, Nicky Grist Stages)

BRC fastest stage times (after round 6/7)

- 1 Elfyn Evans GBR/Craig Parry GBR (Ford Fiesta R5) 41
- 2 Fredrik Åhlin SWE/Morton Abrahamsen NOR (Ford Fiesta R5) 11
- 3 David Bogie GBR/Kevin Rae GBR (Škoda Fabia R5) 4
- = Tom Cave GBR/James Morgan GBR (Ford Fiesta R5) 4
- = Keith Cronin IRL/Galvin Mikie IRL (Citroën DS 3 R5) 4

BRC stages led (after round 6/7)

- 1 Evans/Parry 43
- 2 Åhlin/Abrahamsen 9
- 3 Josh Moffett/John Rowan 6

Junior BRC fastest stage times (after round 6/7)

- 1 Robert Duggan IRL/Ger Conway IRL (Vauxhall Adam R2) 32
- 2 Sindre Furuseth NOR/Hjerpe Jim SWE (Renault Twingo RS) 12
- 3 Gus Greensmith GBR/Alex Gelsomino ITA 10
- = Mattias Adielsson SWE/Andreas Johansson SWE 10

Junior BRC stages led (after round 6/7)

- 1 Duggan/Conway 48
- 2 Furuseth/Undebakke 10
- 3 Greensmith/ Gelsomino 5

## **Standings**

MSA British Rally Championship standings (after round 6/7)

- 1 Evans 135
- 2 Cave 74
- 3 Greer 66

Junior MSA DMACK British Rally Championship standings (after round 6/7)

- 1 Duggan 140
- 2 Furuseth 86
- 3 Adielsson 65

**Stuart Loudon** is a semi-professional co-driver who has started 85 rallies, 18 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.*