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Press Information

MITSUBISHI SETTLES FOR SECOND IN ULSTER



- **Tesco 99 Octane MSA British Rally Championship - Round Four Report**
- **Philip White Tyres Ulster Rally 31st August & 1st September 2007**
- **Gwyndaf Evans claims sound second place**
- **Guy Wilks sidelined by mechanical maladies**
- **Mitsubishi team lead from the start**

3rd September 2007

After topping the leader board for the first half of the Philip White Tyres Ulster Rally, the Mitsubishi Motors UK Works Team finished the fourth round of the Tesco 99 Octane MSA British Rally Championship in a sound second place, Gwyndaf Evans and co-driver Huw Lewis crossing the line over four minutes ahead of their nearest rivals.

The Ulster Rally featured six stages on Friday evening with a further 10 on Saturday, all of which were held on closed roads around the rally's host town of Armagh. The event was also a round of the Global Group Irish Tarmac Championship, which brought with it a number of World Rally Cars.

After dominating round three of the UK's premier rally series, when the team's two Mitsubishi Lancer Evolution IXs finished an impressive first and second, hopes were high for another top performance.

As in all previous BRC rounds so far this year, Guy Wilks and co-driver Phil Pugh were fastest out of the blocks and, after the first stage, led all other BRC competitors, posting a time good enough to put them in third place overall. Unfortunately, their dynamic efforts were short-lived as two-miles into the second stage their car's throttle stuck open – thankfully Wilks discovering the problem before getting to the next corner!

With no other option other than to switch the ignition off each time he wanted to retard his car's progress, for the remainder of the stage and the following two before the first service halt, over two minutes were lost and he dropped to seventh place. The consequent erratic flow of fuel also took its toll on the car's turbo-charger - another factor which added to the delay.

The team's technicians replaced the offending components within the 20-minute service time allowance and, now with his Lancer restored to full power, Wilks set out to make up for lost time.

Notwithstanding his team-mate's dramas, Mitsubishi still led the British Championship field as Evans had been right behind in second place and grasped the BRC baton when Wilks slowed. With the bit between his teeth for Friday's final two night-time stages the masterly Welshman extended his lead to 11 seconds before the overnight halt, ahead of the team's familiar rival Mark Higgins in a Subaru.

As Saturday dawned, rain clouds encircled Armagh and drivers agonised over their choice of tyres – a factor which continued throughout the day. So, with Evans and Higgins at the front and Wilks, who had moved up to fifth by Friday's close of play and was ready for an epic charge, the scene was set for an exciting 10 stages.

But true to the sport's unpredictability, the first of Saturday's stages saw Wilks coast to a halt, a problem in his car's transmission resulting in zero-drive. Then, on the very next stage, it was Evans' turn for misfortune when he clipped a bank coming out of a right-hander. Initially there appeared to be nothing wrong with his Lancer following the brief encounter, but as he drove on it became apparent that a driveshaft had been dislodged, which subsequently led to a broken cross-shaft in the transmission.

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Nursing his car through the rest of the stage and the one that followed, Evans got back to the service area where a hasty change of the transfer box rectified the problem. Although dropping 32 seconds to Higgins, Evans had already done enough to retain second place and, although he knew it would be a difficult task, with seven stages left to go victory was still possible if his opponent suffered a similar fate.

But with changing weather making grip in the Ulster lanes a veritable lottery, it would be a tough call to make up the deficit – even for someone of Evans' experience. With Wilks out and to ensure a healthy points haul for the team, Evans opted to play a waiting game and consequently ready to pounce if Higgins hit problems.

But it was not to be and, after a faultless performance for the remainder of the rally by both car and driver, Evans crossed the line to take second place.

The result sees Evans move up to 4th in the British Championship driver's standings, with Wilks now 5th, whilst Mitsubishi consolidates its second place in the team's category.

Preparations now start for round five of the UK series and a return to gravel roads when the team competes in the International Rally Yorkshire on 6th October.

The Cirencester-based Mitsubishi Motors UK rally team is supported by HKS, Pirelli, Sparco, Speedline Corse, PIAA, Ricardo and Performance Friction Brakes. The team's two Lancer Evolution IXs are built and run on events by ADR Motorsport of Chesterfield. Guy Wilks is supported by Mobil 1 and Sega Rally.

Team Quotes

Gwyndaf Evans

"Second place is okay, but it was a shame not to win – especially after leading for half the rally. Although we made the right tyre choice for most of the event there were still times when the conditions were very tricky and you just couldn't predict the level of grip. With everything clicking into place nicely it was a real shock to run wide and I have to admit it disturbed my rhythm for some time afterwards. I am very grateful to the team for keeping me in the event by getting the transmission changed within the service time and for giving me a car that otherwise ran faultlessly."

Guy Wilks

"After a great start it ended-up being one of those events. I'm disappointed not just for me but for the team too as they did a great job replacing the throttle assembly and turbo on Friday evening, so to go out on Saturday morning because of another problem is a real kick in the teeth. Not scoring on this event means that we now have to concentrate on reliability and being competitive for the rest of the season if we want to keep our title hopes alive."

Paul Brigden

"After Guy's retirement and Gwyndaf's unlucky moment, I'm pleased we were able to claim second place by such a healthy margin. After our convincing one-two result in the Isle of Man it was a shame not to get both cars home this time round and it's therefore important that we focus on getting strong two-car finishes for the remaining three rounds. Having done it before I know we can do it again."

Philip White Tyres Ulster Rally – Tesco 99 Octane MSA British Rally Championship Round four - results

- 1 Mark Higgins/Rory Kennedy (Subaru Impreza) 2:00:19.6
- 2 **Gwyndaf Evans/Huw Lewis (Mitsubishi Lancer Evo IX) 2:01:06.2**
- 3 Phillip Morrow/Simon Morrow (Mitsubishi Lancer Evo IX) 2:05:31.6
- 4 Conrad Rautenbach/David Senior (Citroen C2) 2:07:10.7
- 5 Robert Swann/Darren Garrod (Subaru Impreza) 2:09:23.5
- 6 Wyn Humphreys/ Ally Mackay (Subaru Impreza) 2:11:24.9
- 7 Rob Gill/Anders Howard (Mitsubishi Lancer Evolution IX) 2:16:44.2
- 8 James Wosencroft/Chris Ridge (Suzuki Swift) 2:17:02.1
- 9 Nick Kenny/George Gwynne (Subaru Impreza) 2:17:36.1
- 10 Connor McCloskey/Robbie Durant (Mitsubishi Lancer Evo IX) 2:19:47.8

Tesco 99 Octane British Rally Championship standings - after round four

Drivers	Points
1 Mark Higgins	59
2 Wyn Humphreys	56
3 Robert Swann	43
4 Gwyndaf Evans	42
5 Guy Wilks	41
6 Conrad Rautenbach	37
7 Lorna Smith	34
8= Darren Gass	32
8= Phillip Morrow	32
10 Rob Gill	30

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Teams		Points
1	Stobart TEG Sport	134
2	Mitsubishi Motors UK Ralliart	124
3	TQ RED	110
4	Suzuki GB	108

ENDS

Notes for Editors

Guy Wilks is 26 and lives in Darlington, Co. Durham.

Phil Pugh 36 is and lives in Tywyn, Gwynedd.

Gwyndaf Evans is 48 and lives in Dinas Mawddwy, Gwynedd.

Huw Lewis is 50 and lives in Machynlleth. Gwynedd.

Photo captions

Top: Having led the event early on, driving the Mitsubishi Motors UK works Lancer Evolution IX Gwyndaf Evans and co-driver Huw Lewis finished second in this weekend's round four of the Tesco 99 Octane MSA British Rally championship, the Philip White Tyres Ulster Rally (copyright free image).

Bottom: Guy Wilks and co-driver Phil Pugh initially led this weekend's Philip White Tyres Ulster Rally, round four of the Tesco 99 Octane MSA British Rally Championship, before being sidelined by transmission troubles in their Mitsubishi Motors UK Lancer Evolution IX (copyright free image).

For media enquiries and copyright free images please contact the Mitsubishi Motors UK Rally Team
Press Officer Simon Slade:

Tel: 01935 424873 | Mob: 07966 153555 | E.mail: simon@rpmpromo.com

For all other enquiries please contact:

Mitsubishi Ralliart: Paul Brigden

Tel: 01285 647680 | E.mail: p.brigden@mitsubishi-cars.co.uk

Mitsubishi Motors UK Press Office:

Tel: 01285 647200 | E.mail: n.regalr@mitsubishi-cars.co.uk

www.mitsubishi-cars.co.uk