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## **Fisher takes the Lakes**

Round 3 of the Maxol E85 Ford Fiesta Sporting**Trophy** Ireland series took place on Sunday 4 May when nine registered crews started the Killarney Rally of the Lakes.

The event, run by the Killarney and District Motor Club, based in the bustling town of Killarney, woke on Sunday morning to bright sunshine which had taken over from the damp blustery conditions of the previous day. The rally gave competitors the chance to compete on 140 competitive kilometres over some of Ireland's best classic rally stages.

SS1, Molls Gap at 19.6 kilometres, saw an early blast on a classic stage for the crews. Fastest of the FST drivers was Meilyr Evans (19) from Machynlleth with his co-driver Andrew Edwards. Meilyr, the team-mate of championship leader Elfyn Evans, flew up the legendary stage in a time of 10:46.4, 3.6 seconds faster than Alastair Fisher (19) from Enniskillen with co-driver, Barry McNulty. Third, and just 0.1 seconds behind Fisher, was Elfyn Evans (19) from Machynlleth, who had passed two other competitors on the stage. Fourth on the first stage was FST Ireland championship new boy, James Everard (22) from Hull with co-driver Sam Collis. Everard is currently leading the FST UK series and finished the first stage just 9.2 seconds down on Evans' time.

SS2, Ballaghbeama at 16 kilometres, saw Elfyn Evans top the time sheets, with Fisher just 0.3 seconds behind in second. Meilyr Evans dropped from first to third but stayed within 7 seconds of the new leader, GEMsport team-mate, Elfyn Evans. Everard retired on this stage as a result of an accident. The Englishman was catching another car on the stage and a momentary lack of attention saw him slide wide on a corner and off the road. The car was undamaged but stuck fast and unable to continue.

SS3, Ballaghsheen at 19.4 kilometres, again saw Elfyn Evans top the time sheets, taking the gap to second placed man Fisher to 3.6 seconds. Third on the stage was once again Meilyr Evans, just 1.4 seconds down on Fisher to stay in touch with the leaders.

SS4, Been Hill at 17 kilometres, saw Fisher go back on the attack to take 11.9 seconds from Elfyn Evans and arrive at the first service halt of the day in the lead – by just 8.3 seconds. Second on the stage and third overall was once again Meilyr Evans – the young Welshman showing that he is a fast learner adapting well to the conditions on the stages. Fourth on the stage and fourth in the overall standings was Paul Quinn (19) and co-driver Jason Gillespie.

In service, with the weather conditions clearing and the roads drying, the majority of crews chose the 'dry' weather Pirelli RS7 tyre in order to get the maximum performance.

SS5, Caragh Lake, was cancelled for all the crews in the event after the crash of Gareth MacHale, fortunately without injury.

SS6 was a repeat of the 19.4 kilometre on Ballaghsheen. Once again it was Elfyn Evans topping the timesheets – 4.5 seconds in front of his team-mate Meilyr Evans – who was in turn 0.9 seconds faster than Fisher. Fisher held onto the lead, but now reduced to just 2.9 seconds.

SS7 was a repeat of the 17 kilometre Been Hill stage. Here Elfyn Evans once again took the fastest time, a huge 19.2 seconds faster than his first run of the stage. However, Fisher was again in close attendance – just 0.1 seconds slower to keep his overall lead going into the final service of the event. Meilyr Evans was again in close contact with the leading pair – just 2.7 seconds slower than Fisher.

SS8 saw Elfyn Evans fastest, just 0.5 seconds in front of Fisher with Meilyr Evans once again third. Kyle Orr (18) from Dromore, with young Scotsman, Drew Sturrock on the pacenotes was in trouble on the stage. A broken driveshaft in the previous stage had caused some damage to the gearbox and Orr was keen to get to the finish of the event – but the damage was slowing the car and he would later retire before the finish. Also in trouble was Barry Greer (20) from Carryduff with co-driver John Lemon – a high speed accident would leave the Fiesta ST dented but the crew unharmed – unfortunately unable to finish the event.

Going into the final stage of the event, the top-two were separated by just 2.3 seconds. The 17 kilometre Shanera stage would see another last stage battle for the lead of the Maxol E85 Ford Fiesta Sporting Trophy. Fisher claimed the fastest time on the final stage, just 1.5 seconds in front of the hard charging Elfyn Evans to claim his first FST Ireland win of the year; Elfyn saying at the finish that he had one eye on the championship lead and that second placed points would be perfect for his championship. Meilyr Evans held onto a strong third position – his best result of the year.

**Alastair Fisher (19) from Enniskillen said:**

*"Today has been hard, we have been pushed to the limit – but it has been another great battle. With the win on the Pirelli and now here, this has helped our championship chances no end. I am already looking forward to the next round in the series, and need to try and repeat the performance on this event, it will be tough but I'm ready for the challenge."*

Position	Driver / Co-Driver	Overall Time	Diff. Previous	Points	€ Prize Money
1	Alastair Fisher / Barry McNulty	1:12:17.9		30	€750
2	Elfyn Evans / Gareth Roberts	1:12:21.7	+3.8s	25	€600
3	Meilyr Evans / Andrew Edwards	1:12:49.9	+28.2s	22	€450
4	Paul Quinn / Jason Gillespie	1:15:48.7	+2:58.8	20	€375
5	Billy McCullins / Aidan O'Connor	1:25:08.7	+9:20.0	18	€300

**Points after Round 3**

Position	Driver	Points
1	Elfyn Evans	85
2	Alastair Fisher	55
3	Paul Quinn	53
4	Meilyr Evans	42
5	Stephen Wright	38
6	Adrian McBride	37
7	Barry Greer	36
8	Tadhg Buckley	22
9	Billy McCullins	18
10	Kyle Orr	14
11	James Everard	0

## Championship Calendar

Date	Event	Location
3 February	Galway Rally	Galway City
23 March	UAC Circuit of Ireland	Newcastle
4 May	Killarney Rally of the Lakes	Killarney
15 June	Donegal Rally	Letterkenny
23 August	Ulster Rally	Armagh
28 September	Cork '20' Rally	Cork City

For further information on the Maxol E85 Ford Fiesta Sporting Trophy Ireland, please contact Irish series co-ordinator Richard Millener on [millener@m-sport.co.uk](mailto:millener@m-sport.co.uk)

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