



After a fittingly spectacular opening to the 2026 championship under the Friday night lights of Clonakilty over the St. Patrick's weekend the GK Print Southern 4 Rally Championship makes it's way to the Kingdom for rounds 3 and 4, the Rally of the Lakes. This classic boasts some of the most iconic stages and terrain with this year's event providing a bit of a twist with the return to Millstreet and the Green Glen's arena for service.

With classics like Moll's Gap, Beallaghbeama and Gortnegane it will really be an enjoyable but demanding test for crew members and machinery alike over the course of the weekend.

Coming out of West Cork it was great to see a number of battles raging amongst the overall crews with Daniel Cronin taking maximum points on both days as he gets to grips with his new Toyota GR Yaris Rally 2 car as he kept a clean pair of heels in front of defending champion David Guest in his Ford Fiesta Rally 2. In third place on points leaving West Cork would be Meath based business man Brian Bolger, another member of the Msport stables using a Fiesta Rally 2. This year would be Brian's first foray into the Southern 4 Championship.

One of the finds of West Cork would be the rapid pace set by top 2wd competitors Aaron Browne and Derry Long in their Ford Fiesta Rally 4. Having dialled the car in over the past year to his liking, Aaron would take top 2 wheel drive honours on round 1 and go one better by just slotting the nose of his Fiesta ahead of Bolger's by 1 second to net 3rd place overall points on Round 2. This performance would place the lads ahead of Vincent O'Shea and Eoin O'Donoghue's Darrian in the race for the 2 wheel drive crown this year.

Thomas O'Rourke would pilot the big Evo 10 around to great effect over the course of the weekend to slot in on overall points ahead of Tommy Mason's Mark 2 escort and Mark Dolphin's new class 11R Toyota Starlet.

Some of the unfortunate stories from the weekend would befall Shane McCarthy and Jer O'Donovan which would blot their points scoring over the course of the weekend. O'Donovan had an unfortunate off near the end of the Clogagh stage whilst McCarthy would end his campaign in a big off on the Kilbrittain stage.

In the race for the navigators it would be returning champion Steven Quin who would take the maximum points haul from the opening 2 rounds. The Bandon based man teaming up once again with David Guest to put in a great performance around the Clonakilty roads. 2nd place on equal points would be Monaghan navigator James McEneaney who navigates for Bolger and Derry Long who both stand on 37 points. Thomas Scallen is in 3rd place overall now owing to his good run in the Evo 10 with Thomas O'Rourke.

In the historics it would be a cut and dry performance from previous historic champ Peadar Walsh in his Mk1 Escort co driven by his daughter Grace on round 1 with a maximum haul of points. 2nd place points would go to another defending champion in the form of Aidan Long in his BMW M3. Making

the return to the championship this year would be Duncan Williams who would have a less than optimal first round suffering a few mechanical issues which would leave him with 3rd place points but would turn it all around on the Sunday stages to bag maximum points.

In the Juniors it would be a great start for Darragh Walsh and Gary Lombard who would take the Junior win over the St. Patrick's weekend and taking the lead into the championship ahead of Kyle Browne and Josh Radford with James O'Riordan and Ava O'Driscoll in 3rd after the Super Sunday stages.