



Assess Ireland Rally of the Lakes news

Johnny Hickey to be remembered at the Rally of the Lakes

The late Johnny Hickey will be remembered by his motor club colleagues at his beloved Assess Ireland Rally of the Lakes this weekend.

The hugely popular Killarney and District Motor Club member passed away two years ago.

He was one of the hardest-working volunteers within the ranks of KDMC and his contribution to the Rally of the Lakes is sorely missed in the two rallies that have run since his passing.

The accomplished rally navigator will be forever remembered by his family and friends within the sport after his daughter Alyson unveiled a new trophy in his name at the official launch of the 2023 event on Saturday night.

The Johnny Hickey Memorial Trophy will be presented to the highest-placed co-driver in a two-wheel drive car in the modified car – a category close to his heart – and every year going forward in his home rally.

Alyson, 13, bravely spoke in front of a packed audience at the launch event, about her late father and what motorsport meant to him.

"My dad loved rallying from a very young age and his passion only grew stronger as he got older. He joined my granddad, Charlie Hickey, in the co-driver's position when he was 16-year-old," Alyson told those in attendance,"

"For him, it was never just about the rally – it was about the people who shared his love for it. He believed that the spirit and friendship that comes with rallying was just as important as the thrill of the race."

Alyson was accompanied by her granddad, rally driver Charlie, his grandmother Joan and his aunt Charlene when she unveiled the cup in the Gleneagle Hotel on Saturday.

She received a standing ovation for her powerful and tearful speech that remembered her late dad and rally legend Johnny.

LOCAL CREWS IN TOP CARS

Three local competitors will start the 2023 Assess Ireland Rally of the Lakes in state-of-the-art rally cars capable of winning the event.

Defending champion Callum Devine will start at number one and he will have Muckross co-driver Noel O'Sullivan in a Volkswagen Polo Rally2 alongside.

They dramatically won the rally last year after chief rival Alistair Fisher crashed out in the final stage.

Two more local Volkswagens will start the rally in the hands of Rob Duggan and Alan Ring.

"It is an honour to carry number one on the doors," said O'Sullivan. "The club have put on an incredible route, and it is great to see the two boys out in Polos. There is a very strong entry, and we will do our best to get a good result."

Duggan is the defending modified category champion but has made a surprise step up to the top class.

"It has always been a dream since I was four or five years old to go up The Gap in a top machine," he said.

"I have no idea what to expect, I will only see the car on Thursday morning, I have only done the rally in a modified car, so I guess this car won't be as tail happy."

He will be co-driven, as usual, by Ger Conway.

Duggan's car will be run by Welsh outfit, Melvyn Evans Motorsport, the same team that will run Alan Ring who makes a welcome return to top-flight rallying after a few years contesting events in the historic category.

"The weekend should be good," he said. "Myself and Rob will be teammates and it will be nice to have a proper car for the event."

The rally gets underway with a ceremonial start in Killarney town centre on Friday evening before two action-packed days across 16 stages.

The Saturday run returns to the challenging Beara Peninsula while Sunday morning's action takes place in South Kerry ahead of the grand finale on East Kerry roads on Sunday evening.

NEW TITLE SPONSOR

Assess Ireland, the leading Automotive Assessing, and Engineer Inspection service provider in Ireland, is the title sponsor of the 2023 Rally of the Lakes, "We're thrilled to be title sponsor of the Rally of the Lakes 2023" said Conor Deasy, MD of Assess Ireland. "As a company that's committed to promoting safety and risk management, we see this as a great opportunity to showcase our services and support a fantastic event that's been part of Ireland's motorsport heritage for over four decades."

Information provided to Killarney and District Motor Club and the Rally of the Lakes organising committee by Sean Moriarty of Kerry Motorsport News









