



Killarney Towers Hotel Historic Rally

Message from the Clerk of the Course, Anthony O'Connor

With the event now over the past number of days have been spent reflecting on the weekend. Firstly, congratulations to the overall winners of the Historic Category of the event, the Donegal pairing of Donagh Kelly and Rory Kennedy, taking back to back wins in the amazing BMW M3. Likewise, congratulations to the overall winners of the Modified Category, local crew Colin O'Donoghue and Kieran O'Donoghue in their Ford Escort Mk2. This was Colin's second success at the event, having previously won in 2019. Congratulations also to our various category class winners, many of which, have long supported our event.

Congratulations aside, there are so many that need to be acknowledged and thanked for what ultimately turned out to be a extremely challenging day.

Firstly, thanks to our title sponsors the Killarney Towers Hotel and the O'Donoghue Ring Collection for once again supporting us. Their assistance and enthusiasm for the rally has been incredible. Thanks also to our associate sponsor Brian Glover of BG Motors, Killarney who came on board this year. Brian has a passion for all things automotive and was ready and willing to help out both leading up to the event and also on the day.

Thanks to our Stage Sponsors. We are very grateful for your continued support. In addition, thanks to all businesses who took out various advertisements in our rally programme. We are very appreciative of your endorsements. Without the financial assistance of all of our sponsors it would be impossible to run the rally. I would ask all to support these businesses and entities in every way you can.

Thanks to Gortamullen Business Park, Kenmare, 4 Park Business Centre Farranfore, Killarney Rugby Club and Corcoran's Furniture and Carpets for providing their grounds for service, scrutiny, trailer park, and post event Pairc Feirme. Your support to us in running the event was greatly appreciated.

Following the tragic events at Carrig East, Kenmare earlier this year, the organisers of the event felt it fitting to run the 2025 event in honour the late Mike Gaine. A heartfelt thank you Mike's family and friends who unwaveringly supported us in this endeavour. Mike's passion and enthusiasm for the sport was second to none and his presence is sorely missed by all who knew him.

Thank you also to the greater community of Kenmare and in particular to the residents living on the stages. We were very grateful for your understanding and support of the rally. Thanks also to An Garda Síochána for your assistance.



I would also like to thank all of the marshals, timekeepers, Rally Rescue crews, Ambulance crews, Doctors, Recovery crews and other helpers all of who worked tirelessly on Saturday enduring very long hours and difficult circumstances. Thanks to our neighbouring Motor Clubs for helping to coordinate many of these volunteers. Your support and enthusiasm is a credit to the Motor Clubs you represent. These people took time out of their own lives to help to ensure the rally ran. Thank you to one and all.

Most importantly, I want to thank all of the competitors who chose to enter our event. We were very happy to meet a number of new crews who were on their first visit to the rally this year. We were also absolutely delighted to welcome back so many regular competitors who choose to enter the rally year on year. Your continued support is very much appreciated and never taken for granted. On reviewing the day and speaking to various crews I know some of you had a very good experience while others certainly didn't. As Clerk of the Course, I would like to offer my sincere apologies to the competitors at the end of the field who were only able to compete over two or three stages. Unfortunately, the event was hit by a series of setbacks in the early stages which it was very difficult to recover from. A summary of these issues are as follows:

On the opening stage, Molls Gap, we experienced an incident that required emergency services to be deployed, with two competitors transferred to hospital. As a result, for the first time in the history of the event, crews were diverted onto an alternative road section around Molls Gap to reach service. Unfortunately, heavy traffic congestion caused significant delays.

When Stage 2 began, blockages further hampered efforts to get the rally back on schedule. These blockages, while cleared caused further time delays. Stage 3 then experienced another incident which again required emergency services to enter the stage, causing additional delays in getting cars to Stage 4.

Large spectator numbers contributed to traffic congestion, as vehicles were parked on both sides of the main road, thereby restricting traffic flow. The large crowds in service also created further delays in returning cars to the stages.

Unfortunately, due to the cumulative delays throughout the day, the tail end of the field was unable to start the next three stages as we had exceeded our permitted road-closing times. On the final stage, another accident required the deployment of emergency services, resulting in that stage being cancelled for the latter half of the modified category.

There are certainly points for improvement, but when an SOS alert is received from the tracker system, the organisers have no option but to deploy emergency services to its location. Competitor safety and wellbeing are paramount and must always take precedence.



We are aware of various negative posts circulating on social media. However, I would appeal to everyone to remember the hundreds of hours invested by our volunteer team, who put their personal lives on hold to deliver the best and safest event possible.

This year's event proved extremely challenging, with multiple stoppages and some competitors requiring medical intervention. I would like to wish those injured a swift recovery.

A detailed critique into the running of the rally has already begun by the organisation team. This thorough analysis will review every avenue of the event identifying what aspects worked and what didn't. Everyone involved in the organisation of the Killarney Historic Rally since its inception in 1996 have always strived to provide all of those associated with the rally with the best experience possible. The lessons learned from this examination will then be taken on board to ensure that options and contingencies can be identified and considered ensuring the difficulties encountered last weekend will not happen again.

Yours in motorsport.

Anthony O'Connor



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