

O'Connell Group Cork 20 Rally 2024

Press Release #6 – “WRC ace heading to Cork 20”

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Organisers of this years O'Connell Group Cork 20 Rally are delighted to share the exciting news this morning that fresh from an outstanding performance at the recent WRC Acropolis Rally securing a top 10 finish, FIA World Rally Championship WRC2 contender & Motorsport Ireland Rally Academy driver Josh McErlean will contest the ITRC 2024 season ending counting round, the iconic Cork 20 Rally this month [29 September], marking his first appearance in the ITRC series since 2019.



The FIA World Rally Championship WRC2 contender will tackle the event in a C&M Motorsport Škoda Fabia RS Rally2 with regular co-driver James Fulton alongside and the pairing will go toe-to-toe with the top ITRC series regulars at this years staging of the event.

The rapid Irishman has enjoyed a stellar rise through the ranks since his last ITRC outing at the West Cork Rally some five years ago on his way to clinching the Junior British Rally Championship title, which offered a springboard into four-wheel drive machinery and several seasons behind the wheel of a Hyundai i20 N Rally2 in the FIA European and World Rally Championships.

This season, a switch to the Toksport World Rally Team Škoda Fabia RS Rally2 has paid dividends with some very impressive results and a sensational turn of pace, with McErlean's maiden WRC2 podium coming at Rally Portugal, taking second place after a thrilling final stage shootout for the win.

Just last weekend, McErlean secured a top 10 overall result at the renowned gruelling WRC Acropolis Rally in Greece, one of the toughest events in the world. Less that a week later, he heads for the Overmountain Rally Tennessee in the USA to contest the ARA round.

Now, McErlean will step back on home soil into the very car that secured him the impressive result thanks to leading motorsport sales outlet C&M Motorsport, who secured the car after Greece, but has offered it back to McErlean for the weekend.

The outing at the O'Connell Group Cork 20 Rally will serve as an extended test for the upcoming Central European Rally in October which is McErlean's next event in his WRC2 campaign this season. Cork provides a dynamic location for his maiden outing on asphalt in the Fabia RS Rally2.

“I'm really excited to be heading for Cork and to compete at home once again, it feels like a lifetime since we were last in the region rallying on those classic roads and to be there in the Škoda Fabia RS Rally2 provided by C&M Motorsport is very special,” says McErlean.

“It’s been a whirlwind of a career since I was there in the Peugeot 208 R2, but events in the ITRC and Cork in particular hold some great memories so to be back in the championship in front of such passionate fans and representing the Motorsport Ireland Rally Academy feels like an honour”.

McErlean has been keeping an eye on the Irish Championship during his WRC campaign and has been impressed by the competitive nature of the series this season. But he also acknowledges that the Cork 20 offers an important opportunity for his 2024 plans.

“There has been a great battle between the likes of Callum [Devine] Keith [Cronin] and Matt [Edwards] this year and the pace out front looks good. But we do have a goal here of getting valuable seat time on asphalt, it would be a tough ask to turn up at the Central European Rally with no understanding of the Fabia on tar. So, we will be there to do a job, but also to have fun and it will be great getting back amongst the Irish rallying fraternity again. “I must thank the Academy and all our partners for this opportunity, especially C&M Motorsport, Woodland NI, JMA Ventures and Fire Protection Ireland who have come together to make this project possible. I’m looking forward to this”.

Speaking this morning, Clerk of the Course, Kevin O Riordan stated that he and his organising committee are delighted to share the exciting announcement that the pairing of Josh McErlean and James Fulton will be lining up alongside the ITRC regulars on this years events, Kevin noted that the 2024 event has secured an outstanding entry across the board and the inclusion of the WRC star will further add to the spectacle of the event. With the entries closing date pending there is a lot of excitement waiting to unveil the seeded entry list this evening. We would like to thank all competitors who have shown their support for the event in putting in an entry.

Yours in Motorsport,

Ger Leahy

Ger Leahy,
Press Officer, O’Connell Group Cork 20 Rally 2024

