



2024 Corrib Oil Galway International Rally Press Release 5 (Final Report)

Keith Cronin & Mikie Galvin were the impressive winners of the 2024 Corrib Oil Galway International Rally when they had 38.1 seconds to spare over Callum Devine & Noel O'Sullivan in their VW Polo R5. The reigning Tarmac Champions are still waiting for their first Galway win but will take comfort from that fact they were Cronin's closest rivals over the weekend. Josh Moffett & Andy Hayes took third place in a Citroen C3 having to adjust to a car unfamiliar to them, but they still set particularly good times over the course of the weekend. It was a tough event with 113 starting in the main field on Saturday but only seventy-three of those surviving the weekend.

Day 1

Wet and windy weather on the Friday before the rally had cleared on Saturday morning but the 113 starters had to face into tricky road conditions, with mud, soft verges, and solid stone walls likely to catch out the unwary. Cronin took fastest time on the opening stage, Kilcoona, by just 1.2 seconds from Sam Moffett & James O'Reilly's Hyundai. Devine and O'Sullivan were only one further second despite a faulty intercom. Johnny Greer & Niall Burns got off to a bad start when their Citroen C3 picked up a puncture costing them over a minute, while Ryan Loughran felt his Fiestas setup was not right for the stages.

The first major retirements of the rally followed on Stage 2, Caherlistrane when Matt Edwards and Kevin Eves both went off midway through the stage and were unable to continue. Edwards broke the steering after hitting a bank and Eves hit a chicane having survived an earlier overshoot. Sam Moffett, Desi Henry, and Ryan Loughran all had moments during the middle loop of stages, but worse was to follow for Greer who slid off the road towards the end of the fourth stage, Kilbeg, and out of contention.

Mark Alcorn and Darren Curran were the top national crew in their Ford Escort Mk II and held a thirty second advantage over Rodney Wilton with Frank Kelly only a few seconds further back. The Historic Rally had nineteen starters with a fabulous array of machinery taking to the start line. Ray Breen led for the first four stages and had opened a lead of nearly a minute over Welsh driver Tomas Davies. It went wrong for the Kilkenny driver on the fifth stage when the Subaru slid into a wall and lost several minutes dropping him back to seventh. Meirion Evans edged into a slender lead which he was to hold overnight. Davies & Hugh McQuaid made it an Escort 1-2-3 at the head of the Historic field.

Tyre choice had been a problem for Devine on the middle loop of stages, but with his gamble paying off on the final loop of the day he finished the day fifteen seconds off the lead having relegated Josh Moffett to third place. Cronin was still the man to catch having taken four fastest times over the course of the day. Sam Moffett had dropped back to the latter part of the top ten after sliding into a wall, but only suffering cosmetic damage. Desi Henry moved into fourth place and Declan Boyle

completed the top five after a consistent performance during the day. Frank Kelly, A further trio of notable retirements happened on the sixth stage with Cal McCarthy & Stephen Greaney after accidents and Eddie Doherty with a broken driveshaft, all heading home. Frank Kelly, Rodney Wilton, and Conor Murphy were the top three modifieds overnight after Mark Alcorn lost several minutes with a burst tyre and he was to retire at the end of the first day.

Top 6 Overall After Day 1

1 – Keith Cronin & Mikie Galvin	Ford Fiesta Rally 2	0:59:59.2
2 – Callum Devine & Noel O’Sullivan	VW Polo R5	1:00:14.8
3 – Josh Moffett & Andy Hayes	Citroen C3 Rally 2	1:00:34.7
4 – Desi Henry & Stuart Loudon	Citroen C3 Rally 2	1:00:41.1
5 – Declan Boyle & Patrick Walsh	Citroen C3 Rally 2	1:01:16.2
6= David Kelly & Dean O’Sullivan	VW Polo R5	1:01:41.9
6= Sam Moffett & James O’Reilly	Hyundai i20 Rally 2	1:01:41.9

Day 2

Six stages were on the agenda for the second day, with three runs each over the Belville & Colemanstown tests. Conditions had reverted to Fridays wet and windy weather leaving the stages in a very greasy state. Cronin mastered the conditions best on the opening stage to push his lead out to more than 20 seconds. Callum Devine, Desi Henry, and Ryan Loughran were the only drivers to get within ten seconds of the Cork driver on Belville, Gareth MacHale who had been lying in eighth place retired on this stage. The next stage at Colemanstown was cancelled due to safety concerns at a junction close to the end of the stage. The first half dozen cars were on the stage when it was stopped, and it was a blessing for Devine as he had picked up a puncture just after the start.

The next run of Belville passed without incident with Cronin extending his lead to 25 seconds and Josh Moffett coming under severe pressure from Desi Henry who was now only three seconds behind him. Ryan Loughran was setting times close to Cronin as he moved up the field after his eventful first day and was now well inside the top ten. Stage 12 saw the drivers get their first proper run over Colemanstown and Cronin continued to pull away as Devine was also relatively safe in second place. Henry was sandwiched between the Moffett brothers and was eyeing up a podium position. Loughran’s eventful weekend ended as he got stuck in a bog for over ten minutes and he retired at the end of the stage.

Conor Murphy still led the modified part of the rally but could not shake off Wilton or Kelly and the battle was going to go right to the wire on the final two stages. The Historic Rally had seen a lot of attrition with Duncan Williams, Will Graham and Tom Clark retiring on the first day (Clark did rejoin under Rally 2 on the second day). Trevor Wilson put his BMW into a drain on the second Colemanstown stage having been in the top six. John O’Donnell’s BMW was also showing many battle scars but held fourth behind Evans, Davies and McQuaid who had maintained the podium positions from overnight. The hotly contested RC4 class saw Keelan Grogan and Ryan McHugh having a terrific battle and only separated by a matter of seconds. The conditions had caught out Jack Brennan, Matthew Boyle and Aoife Rafferty and Cian Caldwell’s Peugeot had succumbed to mechanical problems.

The final pair of stages saw Cronin ease out to a thirty-eight second win, his second time winning in Galway having tasted victory back in 2013, and top points in the Tarmac Championship. Devine took a comfortable second place although Josh Moffett did close the gap to thirteen seconds by the end. Behind him there was a tale of woe for Desi Henry who slid off the road and got beached for 90 seconds on the last stage. This promoted Declan Boyle into fourth place, his best result in a number of years. Boyle held off David Kelly by just 3.6 seconds while Henry finished an agonising 1.4 seconds further back in sixth place having been so close to a podium. Sam Moffett was another to drop back

on the final stage just 1,1 seconds behind Henry, meaning there was just 6.1 seconds separating fourth and seventh place. Michael Boyle had a steady run to take eighth place just eight seconds ahead of Joe McGonigle who survived an incident where he bounced off a bank on the final stage and out the car up on two wheels briefly. Gary Kiernan and John McCabe rounded off the top ten in their Fiesta Rally 2.

The modified rally also went down to the wire as Conor Murphy suffered engine problems on the final pair of stages and a late charge from Frank Kelly saw him take the category by just four seconds from Murphy. Murphy had enough in hand to keep Rodney Wilton in third place behind him. Meirion Evans took the Historic win from Tomas Davies, the two Welsh drivers having dominated from midway through the first day. John O'Donnell took third place over the final stage to get past Hugh McQuaid with Galway crew Ross & Arron Forde taking fifth place in their Escort. The RC4 class was won by less than five seconds by Ryan McHugh as Keelan Grogan clipped a bale on the final stage to drop back to second in the category. Joseph Kelly and Killian McArdle were third in their Peugeot with local crew Dylan Donoghue and John Burke finishing fourth in the class and 29th overall. The Junior Rally had its share of drama as Ronan Dorrians lead was wiped out on the last stage as mechanical problems cost him over seven minutes and he had to settle for third place. The winners were Jason Wilkinson & Danny Cannon from Eoin & Darragh Kelly, all crews in Honda Civics.

Top 10 Overall

1 – Keith Cronin & Mikie Galvin	Ford Fiesta Rally 2	1:41:16.8
2 – Callum Devine & Noel O'Sullivan	VW Polo R5	1:41:54.9
3 – Josh Moffett & Andy Hayes	Citroen C3 Rally 2	1:42:08.8
4 – Declan Boyle & Patrick Walsh	Citroen C3 Rally 2	1:43:40.3
5 – David Kelly & Dean O'Sullivan	VW Polo R5	1:43:43.9
6 – Desi Henry & Stuart Loudon	Citroen C3 Rally 2	1:43:45.3
7 – Sam Moffett & James O'Reilly	Hyundai i20 Rally 2	1:43:\$6.4
8 – Michael Boyle & Dermot McCafferty	VW Polo R5	1:46:30.5
9 – Joe McGonigle & Grace O'Brien	Citroen C3 Rally 2	1:46:39.1
10 – Gary Kiernan & John McCabe	Ford Fiesta Rally 2	1:46:46.3

Top 3 Modified

1 – Frank & Lauren Kelly	Ford Escort Mk2	1:48:11.9
2 – Conor Murphy & Sean Collins	Ford Escort Mk2	1:48:15.9
3 – Rodney Wilton & Conor McMahon	Ford Escort Mk2	1:48:29.2

Top 3 Historic

1 – Meirion Evans & Anthony O'Sullivan	Ford Escort RS1800	1:55:07.2
2 – Tomas Davies & Eurig Davies	Ford Escort RS1800	1:55:44.5
3 – John O'Donnell & Oisín Joyce	BMW M3	1:56:03.3

Top 3 Junior

1 – Jason Wilkinson & Danny Cannon	Honda Civic	0:49:46.7
2 – Eoin Kelly & Darragh Kelly	Honda Civic	0:52:39.4
3 – Ronan Dorrian & Jason Tease	Honda Civic	0:56:18.7

Top 3 Galway

1 – David Quigley & Dean Raftery
2 – Pat Kelly & Jonathan Kelly
3 – Dylan Donoghue & John Burke

Honda Civic **1:55:11.4**
Ford Fiesta **1:55:43.6**
Ford Fiesta Rally 4 **1:56:05.7**

Gary Leonard, Clerk of the Course said 'We would like to thank all of those who came and helped over the weekend and your contribution was very much appreciated. Corrib Oil are an excellent title sponsor, and the Connacht Hotel is a superb headquarters for an event as prestigious as the Galway International Rally.'

Kevin O'Driscoll
Press Officer
Corrib Oil Galway International Rally
Tel: 00 353 86 286 6256