

# Breen takes sixth on Corsican Corners

TREVOR MCGRATH

CRAIG Breen, competing on IRC Rally - Tour de Corse finished an impressive sixth overall after a hectic start, close encounters with the scenery and a brilliant fight back.

Traditionally known as the 'Rally of a thousand Corners' referring to the twisty mountain roads where the special stages take place, Breen tamed his Peugeot and after an early indiscretion on stage two where he broke a front drive-shaft dropping down the leader board to 23<sup>rd</sup>, the current World Rally Academy Champion showcased his world class pace to fight back and claim sixth overall by Saturday evening.

The rally kicked on Thursday afternoon with a loop of three opening stages and Breen got off to a flyer recording third best time on

the initial test just 3.6 seconds down on Giandomenico Basso (Ford Fiesta S2000) who set the pace.

The Waterford driver's joy was short-lived however as on the next stage he suffered from a broken front drive-shaft. Craig managed to drive to the end of the test dropping over a minute in the process, falling down the leader board to 11th.

At the end of the first day Craig was down in 23<sup>rd</sup> position.

Day two Friday entailed five stages and Breen was in fight back mode and on a mission to climb the leader board. The morning loop covered stages four and five, Breen charged through both taking fifth fastest time on both and back up to 11<sup>th</sup> overall by midday service. The charge continued as the Breen confidence was back and gained three more places on stage six to move to eighth.

The final day's action included six stages with two stages being

repeated three times. The Peugeot driver gained a place on the morning opener (SS9) taking 6<sup>th</sup> place and on stage 10 Craig consolidated the position but did have a big moment during the middle of the test when he hit a rock face sustaining a front left puncture and dropped around 30 seconds.

Stage 13 went without incident but again on the last stage he had yet another spin but did not sustain any damage or time loss ending a very eventful maiden Tour de Corse with sixth overall.

At the finish a very happy Breen said, "It's good to be at the finish after a tough rally. I've gaining a lot of experience. This is a fantastic event and I think I've taken a major step with learning this car (Peugeot 207 S2000), with my commitment and my pace. This rally is very specialised and for sure it has brought by tarmac experience beyond what has been before."