

Breen joins Peugeot for IRC events

BY TREVOR McGRATH

As last week's local newspapers hit the shelves featuring Craig Breen on his victory at the Carrick on Suir based Willie Loughman Forest Rally the Waterford rally driver released news that he would join French Rally Team, Sainteloc Racing for four rounds of the Intercontinental Rally Challenge (IRC).

The announcement made mutually by the Etienne based outfit and Craig Breen Rallying also emphasizing the new deal would include backing from Peugeot Sport, with Breen and young French driver Mathieu Arzeno competing in two Peugeot 207 S2000's.

The news enhancing the ever increasing profile of the Slieverue driver outlined that in addition to its program in France Rally Championship and Citroen Racing Trophy, SAINTÉLOC Racing will also commit to the Intercontinental Rally Challenge under the name SAINTÉLOC Junior Team with Irish driver Craig Breen spear heading the new team and French driver Mathieu Arzeno taking

the wheel of the second 207 S2000. The pair taking on four tarmac events, starting in April with the Circuit of Ireland Rally and being followed by outings in Corsica, Hungary, Belgium.

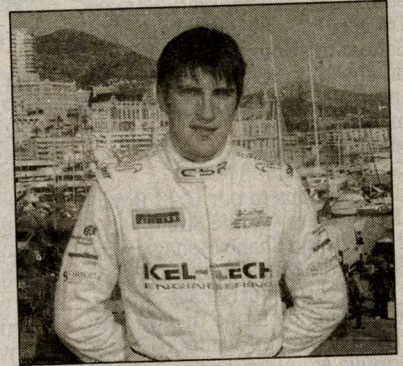
"We managed to set up an IRC program for two promising young rally drivers, with the support of Peugeot Sport. The IRC SAINTÉLOC Junior Team is born." said owner of Sainteloc Racing, Sebastian Chetail, "I really believe in these two young talents. I was blown away by the performance of Craig Breen in the Rally of Catalonia last year. As for Mathieu Arzeno, I know his speed as he drove in the Citroën Racing Trophy last year with us."

On the release of the major new deal, Craig said, "This is a great opportunity for me to work with Peugeot Sport and such a high level team as SAINTÉLOC Racing. Winning the WRC Academy has opened many doors for me and I'm honoured to be giving the chance to drive the Peugeot 207 S2000 on four high profile events in the IRC. I will do my best to demonstrate the potential of the car and SAINTÉLOC

Junior Team. We have a lot of work to do, I took part in two IRC rallies last season and was happy with both results but now I want to show how I've improved and I have the ideal chance starting with the Circuit of Ireland at the start of April."

Delighted with the announcement Craig's father and manager, Ray Breen said, "I am so pleased that all the effort to try and get this deal underway has finally paid off. Craig has been waiting for an opportunity like this for some time now. I believe this is the start of a mutually beneficial three way partnership between Peugeot Sport, Sainteloc and Craig. I know he will do his utmost to showcase the potential of the Peugeot 207 and indeed the Sainteloc team."

The four event deal begins on the 6th/7th of April with the Circuit of Ireland, this year making its maiden appearance in the IRC. A regular visitor to Waterford during the 1980's the rally has changed with the times and is now based within Northern Ireland. This year sees the stages based in Co. Armagh but the highlight of the weekend being the



Craig Breen has signed for Peugeot.

superspecial stage in Belfast's the iconic Harland and Wolff Shipyard.

The Circuit is followed in May by the Tour de Corse, with the Mediterranean event traditionally known as the 'Rally of 10,000 Corners'. A trip to Hungary for the Canon Mecsek Rallye forms round third in early June and the four event deal is rounded off in Belgium and the Geko Ypres Rally on the last weekend in June. Breen states however, "If my performances are on par I would like to extend the partnership and try a gravel rally in the 207 but for now we'll take it a step at a time."