

Breen voted WRC Rally Driver of Year

CRAIG BREEN has been voted World Rally Driver of the Year by the WRC. The poll, which was carried out on *WRC.com*, saw the Waterford driver gain 39pc of the vote with Norwegian driver Mads Ostberg second, securing 38pc of the vote. Sebastien Loeb, who clinched his ninth World Rally title in 2012 came third with 8pc of the vote.

Breen has had a turbulent season, having come in to 2012 as the WRC Academy champion. The 22-year-old began the year winning the opening round of the SWRC in Monte Carlo and he followed this up with a second-place finish in Sweden in the second round of the Super 2,000 category.

Tragedy struck in June, though, when a crash at the Targa Florio rally in Sicily saw Breen lose his co-driver and best friend, Welshman Gareth Roberts. Despite this, Breen got back behind the wheel weeks later and on Roberts' home event, Rally GB, Breen secured another SWRC win.

He backed this up with a win in France and, two weeks ago, a victory at the Rally de Espana to take the Super 2,000 World Rally Championship. This secured Breen's second world rally title in as many years.