

Crowning glory for Breen and Roberts



**Martin
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Motorsport

UNDER pressure throughout the event, Waterford's, Craig Breen (Ford Fiesta) and his Welsh co-driver, Gareth Roberts were crowned the FIA WRC Academy Champions after clinching the title with victory in Rally GB, the final round of the series to claim the top prize worth €500,000.

Not only did the former Billy Coleman award winner have to win the event, he also had to deliver a string of fastest stage times to gain the necessary points (one for every fastest stage time) to overhaul pre-event series leader, Estonian, Egon Kaur.

Fellow Irish driver, Alastair Fisher helped Breen initially by splitting him from his title rival.

However, the Tyrone driver slid down the order and Kaur moved into second.

On Saturday's final leg of six stages, the pressure mounted on Breen after Kaur set the fastest time on the day's opening test. It meant that Breen had to set the quickest times on all the remaining stages.

He had a close call on S.S. 14 when he only managed to beat Kaur by a second. He kept his composure and duly posted the top times on all the three stages of the final loop.

In a nail biting finish, both drivers ended with the same points total, however, Breen got the title verdict as he had set more fastest times than Kaur over the season.

A delighted Breen admitted: "it's the most amazing feeling to get here after all the effort we've put in all year.

"We've finished level on points but we've got it on stage wins so we're thrilled. I think belief is the main thing.

"I've got a fantastic group of people back in Ireland that follow me and believe in me just about as much as I believe in myself.

"We left it until the last stage of the last rally to get that final..."