

Craig Breen

2009 National Junior Rally

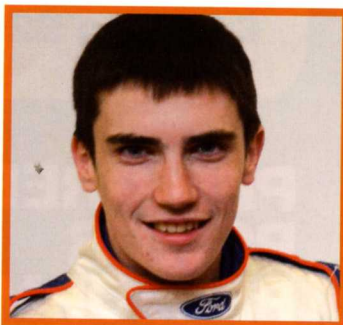
Having travelled the length and breadth of Ireland, Craig Breen clinched the National Junior Rally Championship title with an incredible performance on the final round at the Birr Forestry Junior Rally, beating nearest rival Jonathan Cunningham

by over four minutes.

Craig's result was all the more impressive as he brought his 2WD Fiesta R2 home in third place overall in the rally. The final standings reflect Craig's dominance over the 2009 season.

With four victories, he finished eight and 12 points ahead of Jonathan Cunningham and John Byrnes who secured second and third respectively.

This performance from a junior competitor caps one of the most impressive drives on any rally this



Craig Breen

Date of Birth: 02/02/1990
Home Town: Kilmurry, Slieverue, County Waterford, Ireland
Occupation: Full-time Rally Driver
Road Car: Left Hand Drive ST Fiesta, Which I also use as my Recce Car.
Rally Car: Ford Fiesta R2
Hobbies: Car racing, Karting, on-line gaming, fishing
Sponsors: Kel-Tech Engineering, Dairwood Design, Prime Photography/rallyprint.com, Andrew Bush Promotions.
How did you get involved in Rallying?
My Dad has been involved in Rallying for as long as I can remember and Motorsport as always been part of my life. I was first interested in Karting and found it a good ground here in Ireland and on the Circuits around Europe. I have now turned to Rallying as my Career and my goal is to reach the highest level.
Rally Debut: August 2007, Tipperary Stonethrowers.
What is your best result to date? My best result was my Victory on the 2009 Pirelli International in April. The icing on the cake at the finish was that we were also nominated as the Pirelli Star Driver for our class victory on the event.
Why enter the Junior Championship? At the start of the 2009 season I was heading into my first year of rallying and the NJRC was a natural choice for a young driver like myself. There was some good competition in the series in 2008 and as the championship is also based on both Tarmac and Forest surfaces it would be a prefect place to be. The championship also has the added bonus at the end of the season of being linked to the Billy Coleman Award.
Craig's NJRC Season as it unfolded
Rounds Contested: Five (4 Forestry and 1 Tarmac)
Point's total: 46
Overall Position: Overall Winner
Craig took victory on rounds 1, 2, 8 and 14. He scored maximum points on round 7 and finished second overall in the junior rally.

As the stats show and the overall position after the final round of the season Craig was the class driver of the 2009 championship and is a well deserved champion. He scored 4 victories and dominated on all events he contested. He got off to a perfect start with two wins on the opening two rounds both driving the Citroen C2R2 backed by Derek Jobb. He debuted the New Fiesta R2 on Irish roads on his next outing, round seven the ALMC Stages where he obtained a maximum eight points total in his NJRC class and finished second overall in the junior rally. His fourth rally was the Cork Forestry rd 8, taking victory and winning ever stage in the junior rally. On is last rally of the season he strolled to the junior rally win and clenched the title. The most incredible aspect to Craig's drive was that he took the new Little Fiesta R2 to third overall in the Rally.
Best Performance of the Season: Would have to be the final round where he clenched the title and matched the



Vincent McAree

Date of Birth: 19/6/1986
Home Town: Clontee, Ballinode, Co. Monaghan
Occupation: Design Engineer
Road Car: Ford Focus
Rally Car: Peugeot 206
Hobbies: Motorsport, Night Navigation, Football,
Sponsors: McAree Eng, V MAC Silos, T-MET, And Premier Welding Products.
How did you get involved in Rallying? I've been friends with Maurice Moffett for years and he persuaded to get involved and from the start I've loved it
Rally Debut: North East Mini Stages 2006
What is your best result to date? 2009 Moonraker Junior Rally Win
Why enter the National Junior Rally Championship?
Good opportunity to win both championship and go forward to Billy Coleman award

John's NJRC Season as it unfolded:
Rounds Contested: Four (3 Forestry and 1 Tarmac)
Point's total: 14 Points
Overall Position: Fifth Overall
The early part of the season will bring back better memories for Vincent. He did travel to Tipperary for the opening round but as his Peugeot 206 wasn't ready he used a 106 and register from the second round onwards. Round two was in Carrick on Suir in early March and Vincent picked up six points, round three again forestry was based in Lismore for the Moonraker and the Monaghan man secured victory after a day long battle with John Byrnes. On the next round as the championship moved to tarmac for the Cavan Stages Vincent was hoping for a good result but the event ended on the second loop of stages when he broke a diff ending his rally. Vincent's last outing of the season turned out to be in Cork for the Forestry rally. He was having another battle with John Byrnes over the morning's stages but the engine in his 206 cried enough on stage six. He had intended to contest the final round but had to pull his entry just before the weekend of the event as his engine was not repaired.

Best Performance of the Season: The Moonraker forestry would be the event to pick out as he traded times with John Byrnes during the day and took the victory in fine style.



John Byrnes

Date of Birth: 23/11/1983
Home Town: Cappamore, Co. Limerick
Occupation: Mechanical Engineer
Road Car: Renault Clio Sport 172
Rally Car: Citroen C2 R2
Hobbies: Music, Fishing, Swimming, Mountain Biking
Sponsors: Atomic Energy Drink, Croom Precision Medical, MDR Motorsport, Ballyneety Tyres, Munster Motorsport
How did you get involved in Rallying? I had a go kar and off road bikes when I was a child so it went from there really.
Rally Debut: Killarney Forest Rally 2006
What is your best result to date: Finishing runner up the 2007 Junior Forest Championship.

John's NJRC Season as it unfolded:
Rounds Contested: Eight (5 Forestry and 3 Tarmac)
Point's total: 34
Overall Position: Third Overall
John campaigned the Citroen C2R2 on all the eight rounds that he contested this year. The opening three forestry rounds were backed by the Excel Rally Team and he then moved to the MDR Motorsport Team for the remainder of the season. Over the first three events he picked up eight points but failed to finish both the Tipperary forestry rally and the Carrick forestry with the car letting him down. This hampered his championship bid and he suffered for not making a good start. As the championship made its first transition to tarmac of the year John made his move. It started with six points on his home event in Limerick and then followed that result by finishing second overall on the Ravens Rock junior rally based in Carrick on Suir. For the third rally in a row John scored six points at the ALMC. In what turned out to be John's last points score of the season he had a great battle with NJRC class competitor Vincent McAree at the Cork forestry junior rally. At the finish John came out on top and scored eight points. Going into the Final day's action in Nenag John was lying third place four points with a slim chance of the title but that chance was taken from him before the rally got under way as Vincent McAree had to withdraw his entry. The knock on effect for John was that he now could not score enough points to overhaul the championship leader.

Best Performance of the Season: John's best performance of the season came on round three the Moonraker forestry based in Lismore. He took an early lead and was having a great battle with Vincent

WORDS
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PICTURES
rallyprint.com



STANDINGS

1 Craig Breen	46
2 Jonathan Cunningham ..	38
3 John Byrnes	34
4 John O Connor	20
5 Vincent McAree	14
6 Kevin O'Connor	12
7 Kevin Gallagher	8
= Chris Malloy	8
9 Brendan O'Mahoney	6