

Consistent Craig nets valuable points in Canaries

BY TREVOR MCGRATH

A dramatic two days in the Canary Islands saw the number one Peugeot Rallye Academy crew Craig Breen and Paul Nagle claim another second place which puts them in the immediate wake of Jan Kopecky in the European Championship standings.

A PERFECTLY-PACED RUN BY CRAIG BREEN

The Spanish event saw Craig Breen produce another display of his speed and hallmark consistency in spite of the first day's delicate conditions and despite an early 10-second penalty after checking in two seconds late at a control following a late tyre choice. Indeed, fickle weather made tyre calls particularly difficult on Day 1, but Irishmen Breen and Nagle kept up the fight against the higher-performing RRC cars and against drivers who have more experience of this event. They were fast and consistent and posted top-three times on nearly every stage. Craig didn't miss a beat in the Saintéloc-run 207 and completed the opening leg in third place behind Kubica and Kopecky. Saturday's action was entirely dry and Craig kept up his

effort to collect second overall after Kubica's crash. The result takes him to second in the ERC's provisional standings ahead of the all-gravel fourth round in the Azores on April 25-27.

CRAIG BREEN: "Paul and I functioned well together this weekend. I am very pleased with the result because second place means a good points haul. I think the set-up of the car was a little too aggressive during the early part of the rally, but we

changed the balance for the second leg and it was much better after that. We continue to learn and this rally was good for our experience. I am very happy with the result."

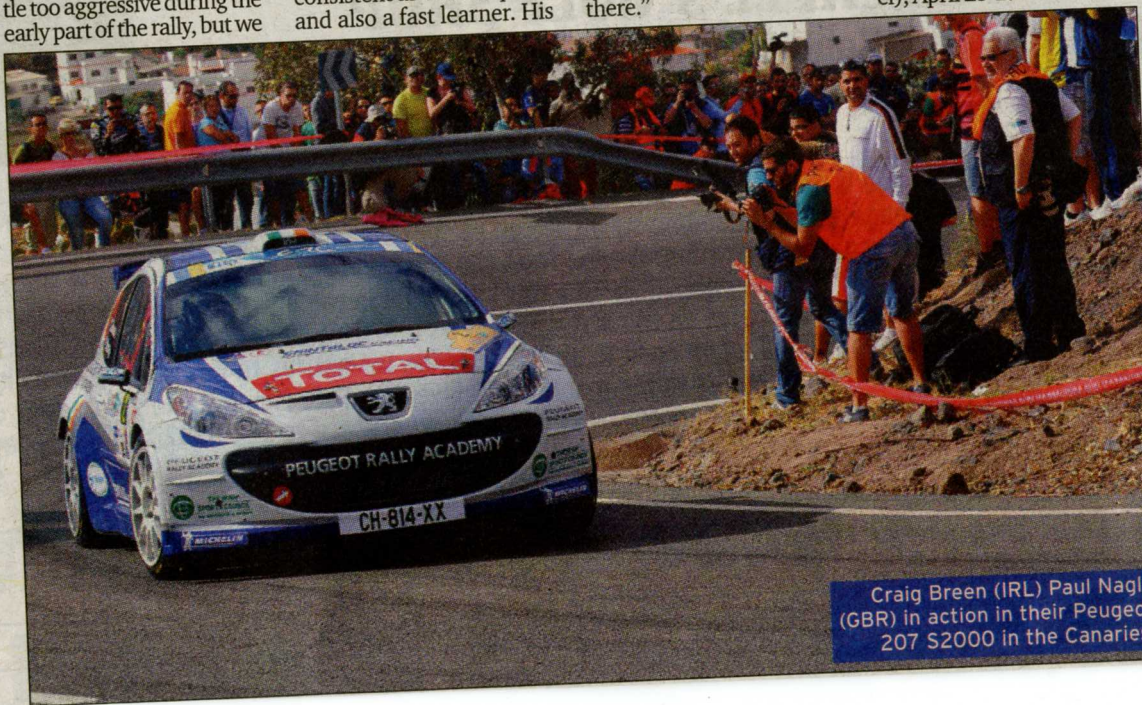
BRUNO FAMIN: "This rally showed that the Peugeot Rally Academy has recruited some excellent drivers. Stéphane Lefebvre produced a strong run in Latvia, while Craig Breen is consistent as well as quick, and also a fast learner. His

approach is very intelligent, as he demonstrated once again this weekend, and he is emerging as a strong contender in the championship. The conditions weren't easy for Jérémi's debut but he did a sound job and progressed with every stage, and was even a rival for Craig at times. His double puncture was part of the learning process. In the Azores, we will have all three drivers who will face stiff competition there."

Final Rally Positions: 1, J. Kopecky (Skoda). 2, C. Breen (Peugeot 207S2000), +1m52.4s. 3, L. Monzon (MiniRRC), +3m18.9s. 4, A. Aigner (Subaru), +6m50.8s. 5, G. Bonnefis (Mégane), +8m31.0s.

Championship Standings: KOPECKY 76, BREEN 58, KETOMAA 39, DELECOUR 32, BOUFFIER 31, MONZON 24.

Next round: Azores (gravel), April 25-27



Craig Breen (IRL) Paul Nagle (GBR) in action in their Peugeot 207 S2000 in the Canaries.