

Tilemaster Adhesives Lee Holland Memorial Rally

Frank Bird flew to a dominant maiden Motorsport News Circuit Rally Championship win in the Tilemaster Adhesives Lee Holland Memorial Stages at Anglesey, but Chris West could celebrate defending his title with second place.

West and co-driver Keith Hounslow only needed to see the final time check unscathed to be confirmed champions for a second consecutive season, and second place on the road was enough for the third seed to seal the deal in his Peugeot 306 Maxi.

While West was triumphant, a new rallying star was born as Formula Renault Eurocup regular Bird teamed up again with Jack Morton to put together a scintillating display in challenging conditions. A fightback was required from the Ford Focus driver after a stage one off on his maiden gravel ventures. Over 50 seconds back, it left the Ford Fiestas of double winner Guy Smith and father Peter Smith to head the way.

When the latter was put out of the rally by water pump failure, son Guy looked odds-on for win number three with a 31s lead heading into the interval after four stages. Misfortune then hit again as, following a mechanical issue forcing him to stop on stage five briefly, a collision in sleet conditions at the Corkscrew with Rob Hughes' Fiesta put both out of the rally with damage.

A charging Bird was transformed from his early moment and reeled off seven stage wins from the eight to overpower West and seal a maiden win on only his second rally outing, much to the delight of onlooking father Paul Bird, a former rally driver himself.

West and Hounslow sealed their fate with second place in Wales, while local driver and previous Lee Holland Rally winner Wil Owen marked his return with a podium in his Ford Escort Mk2.

Bird said "I can't quite believe it really. Only my second rally and third time in the car, and I really enjoyed the rally here. Jack has helped me so much and I wouldn't really be here without him. Thanks to the team and Dad for all their help. I'd love to do more, so it's about trying the sort the dates out for my other racing [commitments]. I had a little off on the first stage and conditions have changed all day, but I've enjoyed it."

West added "We're champions again so I'm happy. It was another good event, but we just couldn't compete with the 4WD cars today. Still, we've done alright here, and picked up pretty strong points hauls all year. We kept getting better."

Owen commented "It was nice and dry in the morning, but then it turned to rain so we chanced it on a set of full wets, and it worked. It was very scary on the last stage when I had a big moment at the far corner, flat in sixth gear. We didn't hit anything! I've always liked this event, as this was one of the first rallies I ever did when I was 17. It was good, and went really well.

Fourth went to Nigel Mummery and Fiona Scarrett in their Ford Focus, ahead of two Escorts in the hands of a flying Eric Roberts and regular Stephen Tilburn. Darren Meadows also impressed in seventh place ahead of Ciro Carannante's Porsche Cayman, finally utilising a set of wet tyres he was reluctant to surrender. Mike English and the BMW Mini Cooper of Tomas Delaney rounded out the top 10.

Class A

Winner Adam Ripper took the class and MN spoils at the last in a highly competitive class A contest.

Victory looked set to go to the Vauxhall Corsa of locals Dion Rowlands and Kai Alcock, until a stage seven collision with a tyre stack ended their rally and gave Dale Lawson an opportunity to steal victory.

A slow puncture cost his MG ZR however, Ripper's Nissan Micra victorious ahead of the consistent Craig Aston in 'Sharon', the nickname given to his trusty Toyota Yaris. "What a track", said Aston. "It's places like this that make me realise why I bought this car again."

Six points is now the difference heading into the finale at Cadwell Park, a hopeful Lawson adding "I love Cadwell. It's not over yet!"

Class B

The offending tyre stack also cost Ryan Simpson the class B win, after he had no way of avoiding the collision that followed.

A familiar face inherited the victory. 2016-17 champion Ian Woodhouse took the wheel of Paul Sheard's Mazda MX-5, and duly added another win to its name ahead of Ashleigh Morris. Sitting alongside Ian Woodhouse was our own **Bruce Chonka Lindsay**

"It drives like a little go-kart", he said. "Today is the first time I've even driven the car."

Class C

Stage seven claimed another class leader in Joshua Davey's Darrian, which had lead from the opening stage until mechanical problems ended his run prematurely.

The flying Ford Escort of Eric Roberts slid its way to a spectacular victory instead, having kept the Darrian man honest throughout. Another Escort took MN spoils, Mike English surviving a sodden stage on slicks to return the Cetus Solutions-backed car to winning ways.

Class D

West and Hounslow continued their class domination also, taking the D1 honours.

Bird and Morton could celebrate more silverware on top of their overall victory, winning D2 ahead of fellow Focus driver Mummery.



1st Frank Bird-Jack Morton Ford Focus 07WRC



2nd Chris West-Keith Hounslow Peugeot 306 Maxi Kit Car



Wil Owen-Llion Owen Ford Escort Mk.II



Joshua Davey-Tamsyn Davey Darion T90



Stephen John Tilburn-Jack Benjamin Tilburn Ford Escort RS2500



Mark Smith-Tim Nunn Ford SBD Escort RS



Nigel Mummery-Fiona Scarrett Ford Focus RS



Darren Meadows-James Squires Mitsubishi EVO



Ciro Carannante-Simon Coates Porsche Cayman



Rob Hughes-Sion Cuniff Ford Fiesta



Mike English-Andy Robinson Ford Escort MK2 RS



Guy Smith-Steve McNulty Ford Fiesta R5