

MOUNTAINOUS CHALLENGE FOR THE NI SEVENS



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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

It was a damp Saturday morning when the NI Sevens rolled up to the Mourne for the picturesque Spelga Pass Hillclimb, organised by the Rathfriland Motor Club.

The initial reports from the hill itself was slippery with very little grip available in the damp, overcast conditions. At least the weather was starting to look brighter, by the time the first practice run was started. The hill itself is a quick uphill start into 2 tight hairpins before a final flat-out section to the finish line. There was to be 2 unofficially timed practice runs followed by 3 timed runs. The fastest of the three timed runs would win.

Quite a few of the NI sevens missed the event, since the Challenge title had already been decided in favour of Ryan Magennis. Half a dozen of the bike-engined sevens chased the 20 points on offer.

While the new champion Ryan himself wasn't there, his car was. It was being driven by his dad, Gerry, an ex stock-car racer. It would be interesting to see how well Gerry could adapt to the high revving engine, six speed sequential gearbox and road legal Toyo tyres.

There was a bit of a delay when one of the first saloon cars up the hill rolled. Thankfully everyone was OK, but when the cars from the Saville Machinery and Motorhomes NI Sevens Challenge finally took to the hill it was hillclimb specialist Barry McBride who was quickest in the tricky conditions with a 64.77s for his first practice run.

The sun came out and as the course started to dry, conditions improved and the times dropped accordingly.

This was reflected in the times for practice run 2. Jack Boal posted 58.84, with Trevor Allen and Barry McBride close behind on 59.07 and 59.19.

As the afternoon wore on, the sun shone, heating the road allowing the tyres more grip and subsequently faster times.

On the first of the officially timed runs Boal was slow away from the line, dropping a couple of seconds, but was quickest through the hairpins to post 58.65. Gerry Magennis was showing some decent form as well, posting 58.35 and starting to look at home in the lightweight bike-engined class.

But it was another hillclimb veteran, Jimmy Dougan, who posted the quickest time so far with a 57.07. McBride clocked 57.45 to keep the pressure on at the top.

Run 2 saw Jimmy lose almost a second on the bottom part of the hill which he struggled to make up, ending up almost half a second down on his first timed run.

Jack Boal got a much better start and posted 57.10 to move up to second overall behind Dougan. Gerry Magennis had also ducked below 58 seconds with a 57.68. Barry McBride was almost a second off his best time after getting way out of shape exiting the second hairpin, showing some of the MK2 Escort men how to entertain the crowds!

Run 3 got underway with Barry posting 57.02, taking the lead, and Alan Davidson moving up to break the 58s barrier with a 57.77. Gerry Magennis was unable to improve upon his previous time due to an untidy hairpin section. Jack Boal was close to his second run time, but was unable to improve on 57.10 despite clocking an impressive 98mph through the speedtrap. Barry McBride was able to put in his fastest time of the day, clocking 57.02.

Jimmy Dougan was also able to improve his time managing a blistering 56.66, sneaking into the top ten overall of the hillclimb. He must have thought he had done enough to win, but it was Trevor Allen in his Stryker who was quickest through the start and hairpin sections, taking 0.75s off his 2nd run time to post 56.47, and take the win in the Saville Machinery and Motorhomes NI Sevens Challenge class.

This result tightens up the 3-way race for the Rookie Of The Year title, with Alan Davidson currently leading with 157 points, ahead of Jack Boal on 138 and hillclimb winner Trevor Allen on 132. With up to 44 points available at the final rounds in Kirkistown, it should make for some interesting racing.

Spelga Pass Hillclimb Results Class 7a NI Sevens

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|-------------------|--------|
| 1) Trevor Allen | 56.47s |
| 2) Jimmy Dougan | 56.66s |
| 3) Barry McBride | 57.02s |
| 4) Jack Boal | 57.10s |
| 5) Gerry Magennis | 57.68s |
| 6) Alan Davidson | 57.77s |

The final 2 rounds of the 2011 season are to be held at Kirkistown in a race double header on Saturday the 24th September.

Saville Machinery and Motorhomes NI Sevens Challenge Points Table

1 Ryan Magennis*	224
2 Jimmy Dougan	127
3 Alan Davidson	100
4 Jack Boal	99
5 Trevor Allen	93
6 Larry Mawhinney	56

*Challenge winner for 2011

ENDS.

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