

HIGH PRAISE FOR 2010 RACMSA RALLY OF SCOTLAND FROM HOME HEROES

Top drivers Alister McRae, Guy Wilks and Kris Meeke all agree that 2010's RACMSA Rally of Scotland is going to be a stand-out sporting event for the nation and UK motor sport as a whole.

This year's Rally of Scotland takes places from 15-17 October and will be the penultimate round of the high-profile Intercontinental Rally Challenge calendar that includes other events in Monte Carlo, Brazil, Argentina, Spain, Italy, Belgium, Portugal, Czech Republic and Cyprus.

Former Scottish and British Rally Champion McRae, from Lanark, will contest what will be his home event in a Proton Satria Neo for the Proton R3 Rally Team. It's one of four IRC events he's scheduled to contest in addition to the Asia-Pacific series which he currently leads.

McRae, aged 39, comments: "Rally of Scotland is pretty special for a Scotsman. Seeing the Saltires at the side of the road gives you a big boost and, of course, these are some of the best stages in the world. I have good memories of last year's Rally of Scotland. It was my first IRC round for Proton and Proton's best result of the year. I'm sure this year will be a great event – maybe the sun will even come out!"

Skoda UK driver Wilks, last year's Rally of Scotland winner and third in the current IRC table is eager to retain his 2009 crown. He also believes this October's event will provide even more excitement for both casual and die-hard motor sport fans alike across Scotland thanks to a demanding route that takes in some classic rallying stages set against some truly stunning Scottish scenery.

The 28-year-old from Darlington adds: "Last year's Rally of Scotland was my first event in a Škoda Fabia S2000, so winning was a very special moment in my career. The stages in Perthshire and Stirling are fantastic. Each one is a real challenge – very fast in places, a lot of surface and camber changes, blind crests, steep dips and beautiful scenery. It's a rally which rewards the brave. It's absolutely flat-out in places and if you are totally committed you can push very hard and drive right on the limit."

"It might only be the second time Rally of Scotland has run, but it's quickly established itself as a favourite in my rally calendar. Scone Palace is a wonderful location to start the rally and it's a great stage for spectators. All the forest stages are fantastic, too. You couldn't want for a nicer opening forest stage than Craigvinean, as it's really fast and flowing, Drummond Hill is a legendary stage, Errochty is open and very fast, Achray is incredibly picturesque and Loch Ard is a real sting in the tail."

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"I'm really looking forward to this year's Rally of Scotland. It's running a month earlier this year over a Friday to Sunday format, and there is every chance the battle for the IRC title will still be wide open when we arrive there in October."

Meeke, the 2009 IRC Champion, echoed Wilks's sentiments – it was this pair that fought an epic duel during the course of last year's event which the Northern Irishman thought he'd won until a minor technical discrepancy on his factory Peugeot 207 meant victory was instead handed to his Skoda rival.

The 30-year-old from Dungannon, currently fifth in the 2010 IRC standings, says: "This year's Rally of Scotland will be very special to me for lots of reasons. For starters it's my 'home' event and as the defending IRC Champion it will be great to be back competing in the UK. Secondly, there's some unfinished business from last year when I finished in front only to be denied the victory a few days later."

"But I had really enjoyed the rally; the stages were spectacular and among the very best we have in the IRC. This year, as the penultimate round in the championship, it should be even more competitive and exciting. There should be a lot still to play for."

Ends.