at the club website or leaflets available at they lost 3-2. Wednesday with the Michael Ryan spon- week, the water conditions were now U50 1st Ray Power.

Breen ready for brace of Baltic tests

BY TREVOR MCGRATH

AFTER a two month lay off, the World Rally Championship Academy kicks back into action on the 28th of July for Waterford rally driver Craig Breen as he takes on World Rally Finland, the third round of the 2011 WRC Academy series.

Breen will be in catch up mood as he trails championship leader Egon Kaur from Estonia by 45 points. Netting 13 points from the opening two rounds is scant reward for Breen's endeavours as the twenty-one year old has definitely been the driver to watch.

He led in Portugal but crashed out when leading and his only consolation was five points for setting five fastest stage times. In the second event in Sardinia, Breen was the pacemaker once more, but a damaged sump on stage four meant he had to finish under 'Super Rally' rules. Nine fastest stage times over two events has shown Breen's potential, however he really needs to win in Finland to give himself a fighting chance for the reminder of the season.

Even though the 45-point deficit is not insurmountable, Breen knows he faces an uphill battle.

"There's no doubt about it, it's a big task, but with points on offer for fastest stage times, it is possible, I have little option only to go as hard as possible in Finland while Egon (Kaur) can finish third and fourth and that will still keep him at the top."

Reflecting on his first round in Portugal, he remarked, "I'm a little annoyed now, I should have been a bit cleverer. The accident happened on the second day, I was comfortable; I had a good lead, but then ran out of road and got stuck. Realistically I, and indeed a number of the others, will be looking for Egon to have a non-finish to open it up."

In preparation for the trip to Finland Breen has earmarked next weekend's Rally Estonia to get some mileage under his belt and get his car setup finalised as the stages are much the same as the Scandinavian event.

Rally Estonia is a two day event taking place on Friday and Saturday next and is based in the Southern City of Otepaa. Breen, along with seven of his peers from the WRC Academy, will do battle on the 162 competitive kms which are spread over nine special stages. The rally action will begin with a ceremonial start from the Otepaa Tehvandi Ski Stadium on Friday afternoon, Day one takes in the opening gravel test (18.4 km) and the Otepaa City stage (5.3km) which is tackled twice. Day two consists of a double loop of three gravel stages with each loop covering 66.6kms.

Breen is looking forward to the Baltic adventure stating, "My goal is to get some competitive mileage in Estonia before Rally Finland and to get a good setup so when we go to Finland we will be quick from the word go. It will be interesting to compare myself against other drivers in the WRC Academy. I'm really looking forward to it".

Craig Breen is in for a busy couple of weeks, first up is Estonia this weekend.