

Flying Breen clinches fourth major rally title of season



Plenty to be happy about.....Piltown rally driver, Craig Breen (right) and co-driver Gareth Roberts have enjoyed a terrific season so far. Here they celebrate another big win.

FOR19-year-old Kilkenny driver Craig Breen and his Welsh co-driver Gareth Roberts the recent WRC Rally GB proved to be a nail biting weekend as they did enough to clinch the prestigious Fiesta Sport Trophy International series with their 600cc Ford Fiesta R2.

After clinching the UK and Irish Fiesta series on the Ulster International Rally, and then wrapping up the National Junior Championship on the Birr Forestry Stages, two weeks before Rally GB, the R2 Fiesta's fourth major title

was a far cry from the going to go from this? There Gareth joined me then things went up from the Birr Forestry Stages, two weeks before Rally GB, the R2 Fiesta's fourth major title

go and I thought that Patrick Anglade would take the title. We lost eight minutes and dropped from first to last. We made the decision not to Super-Rally but we kept going as the penalties were less."

It was a wise decision and the crew's outright speed in the Dairwood Design R2 Fiesta was to prove pivotal as 12 fastest stage times over the weekend provided them extra bonus points. With other crews falling by the wayside on the slippery Welsh stages Craig moved up into third in the FSTI rankings.

"The final day was agonising," he recalled. "We knew if we stayed third we would clinch the FSTI crown and we heard every little rattle. To come back to Cardiff though and have done enough was a superb feeling. It was a year that has been way beyond my expectations."

Sealed the title

A win on the final stage sealed the title on this difficult event, but clinching the National Junior Championship with a fantastic third overall finish on the Birr Stages had provided an ideal test for Rally GB.

"Believe it or not Birr was an ideal test," Craig continued. "I hadn't done Rally GB before and when it was raining heavily in Birr, Gareth said "this is like GB". It was similar. I have enjoyed immensely competing in the National Junior series this year.

"I think the format with the mix of tarmac and

to have a go at claiming a top two-wheel drive position. I am very excited about it. I am really enjoying driving this new R2 Fiesta.

"It's more stable than the ST Fiesta and you have to keep the engine buzzing which is more the style of driving required for the new generation of 1600 turbo or S2000 rally cars. So the R2 is a good car to learn more in." The IRC will provide another valuable experience for the promising South Kilkenny youngster who graduated from kart racing. So far he has put the experiences to superb use.

Breen has shown himself to be one of Ireland's most promising rallying talents in years.

No real pressure

"It will be the first rally where I have had no real pressure," Craig said. "We intend to give it a good go. It depends how many R3 cars enter, but I would like

All invited to dinner with the stars

KILKENNY fans have been invited to dine with the stars on Friday week.

The County Board's gala four in-a-row All-Ireland medal presentation dinner will be held in the spacious Hub at Langton's Cillín Hill.

Because of the vast accommodate afforded by the venue, there will be plenty of room for followers to join the celebration and to rub shoulders with the conquering heroes who this year completed county's first four in-a-row at All-Ireland level.

Heretofore there was little or no opportunity for supporters to join in this medal presentation, simply because a venue big enough to accommodate it was not available.

In former times attendance was by invitation only, but the Board has decided to open up the function to fans for the first time this year. Over 600 attended the function in 2008.

GAA President Christy Cooney will be in attendance, and RTE personality Michael Lyster will be MC.

Medals will be presented to the senior hurling squad who won the League/Championship double and to the