

SPORT

Rallying

A Taylor-made win at historic event

The Legend Fires North West Stages Rally in partnership with Simpson's Skoda, not only lived up to expectations – it exceeded them.

That's the view of the rally organisers who estimated Saturday's rally attracted more than 7,000 fans, and that was in addition to the 5,000 or so who packed Garstang's High Street for Friday evening's ceremonial start.

The carnival atmosphere created at Friday's start set a tone that continued throughout the following day with the spectator zones on the Nicky Nook and Staynall special stages packed with fans.

Some were hardened rally fans who travelled the length and breadth of Britain to watch the event, but most were local folk witnessing a special stage rally for the first time and loving every second.

The contest unfolding before them proved one of the closest in the rally's history



Wyre's highest hopes were with Simon Bowen and Richard Robinson

with the three cars taking the podium places after more than 50 miles of timed to the second competition, only separated by five seconds.

Carlisle's Peter Taylor and his Newcastle-based co-driver, Andrew Roughead, took the spoils in their Ford Fiesta WRC as Knutsford's Alex Laffey, co-driven by Stuart Loudon claimed the runners-up spot in their Ford Fiesta R5.

Preston's Neil Simpson and co-driver Michael Gibson took the final podium place in a

Skoda Fabia R5.

Hopes for a win by a Wyre crew were pinned firmly on the shoulders of Hambleton duo Simon Bowen and Richard Robinson, who won the rally in 2017 in their ex-Peter Solberg Subaru Impreza WRC.

They set the early pace setting fastest times on all three opening stages but a broken rear differential on the following Weeton stage saw them slip to 16th place.

Once that was replaced at

the Myerscough College service halt they set more fastest stage times, gaining 10 places before clutch failure finally put paid to their rally.

Top finish on the day by a Blackpool South Shore Motor Club member came from John Stone, whose Legend Fires company are the rally's long term main sponsor.

Stone and co-driver Jack Morton had endured a trying day finding suitable suspension settings on their Ford Fiesta WRC.

Having survived a near roll on the final Staynall stage, right in front of a packed spectator area, they finished 11th.

South Shore crews were among the prizes, however, as Graham Butler and Chris O'Connor brought their GBR-nutrition.com Ford Escort RS1800 home first in the class for historic cars.

More prizes came South Shore's way in the 1600cc class where Neil Wearden and Calum Cross finished second

in the Head Dyke Garage Hyundai i20.

The Benson brothers, David and Steven, took the third in class awards in the Iain Gorrie Motor Engineer Honda Civic.

It didn't end there as South Shore's David Gratrix and Iain Reece also won third in class awards, theirs in the 2000cc category in their Renault Clio 182.

A host of other South Shore members made the finish, a superb effort given that a third of the 116 cars that started the rally failed to finish.

Adrian Atkinson and Paul Reader brought their Warden Construction Mitsubishi Lancer Evo6 home in 37th place.

That was three places ahead of Matt Daniels, who guided Manxman Sean Kelly home in his Lancer Evo9.

Dave Riley and Gary Dillon finished 47th in their Lancer Evo4 while Chris Sharpe-Simkiss helped Tim Metcalf finish 56th in an Escort Mk2.

It wasn't a good day, however for Mark Holmes and Craig Simkiss, who were forced into retirement on the rally's second stage when the cambelt broke on their MG Metro 6R4.

Barry Armer was another who failed to finish after Michael Holland's Impreza developed an electrical issue.

All three of Warton's Lightning Motorsport Club's members made the finish.

Chris Melling and Andrew Peak brought their BMW E30 home in 55th place with Roy Wadsley, co-driven by Mark Broadbent, finishing 61st in his Ford Escort Mk1.

As in previous years, the rally has aimed to raise significant sums for charitable causes; indeed, that total figure to date is more than £120,000.

The exact amount raised this year won't be known until the final accounts are formalised but the organisers are quietly confident it will be in the region of £10,000.

PHIL JAMES

The Fylde Coast's top GOLF TOURNAMENT IS BACK!

The Gazette is delighted to welcome Blacktax Taxis as sponsor of this year's matchplay golf tournament. The tournament is open to local male amateur golfers aged 17 or over who are members, with a certified and active handicap, at one of the following clubs: Knott End, Fleetwood, Staining, Poulton, North Shore, Blackpool Park, Herons Reach, St Annes Old Links, Lytham Green Drive, Fairhaven and Royal Lytham. The handicap again will be ¾ difference for the tournament.

The competition consists of five rounds which are played on local courses. The quarter finals will take place at Lancaster Golf Club and the semi finals and final will be played on the fantastic Henry Cotton course at the five star Penina Golf complex in The Algarve.

HOW TO ENTER

To enter the tournament please complete the attached entry form and return it to: The Gazette Golf Competition,

Promotions Department, Avroe House, Avroe Crescent, Blackpool Business Park, Blackpool FY4 3DP to arrive no later than Friday April 12th 2019. Alternatively you can enter by calling The Gazette golf hotline on 01253 361893/361709 Or you can register online at www.blackpoolgazette.co.uk/matchplaygolf/

The cost to enter the competition is £10. However, you will be reimbursed in the form of £10 worth of taxi vouchers from Blacktax taxis. Full rules and conditions are available on www.blackpoolgazette.co.uk £1.31 booking fee applies when registering online.

Thank you to all of the golf clubs that have kindly agreed to waive green fees for the tournament.

FINALS

Our tournament semi finalists and finalists will be invited to play on the stunning Sir Henry Cotton Championship Course at the 5 Star Penina Golf Resort,

Portimao, Portugal. The trip will include flights from Manchester, transfers to and from the hotel and 3 nights dinner, bed and breakfast accommodation at the superb Penina Golf Resort Hotel on the Algarve from Thursday September 26th to Sunday September 29th.

5 Star Penina Golf Resort



Set around the fringes of the resort, Penina has three separate golf courses, which together make up the legacy of Sir Henry Cotton's time at the fantastic Algarve destination. Penina not only boasts three terrific golf courses, it is also one of the best established 5* resorts not only in the Algarve, but in the whole of Europe. Penina Hotel & Golf Resort is proud to offer outstanding 5-star luxury, great golf and attentive staff.

MATCHPLAY
GOLF
COMPETITION
2019

Blacktax
01253
596 • 596

#friendly taxis

Schedule of Rounds

Round 1 – Wednesday April 24th – Friday May 10th
Round 2 – Wednesday May 15th – Friday June 7th
Round 3 – Wednesday June 12th – Friday June 28th
Round 4 – Wednesday July 3rd – Friday July 19th
Round 5 – Wednesday July 24th – Friday August 16th
Quarter finals Tuesday September 3rd
Semi finals and final Thursday September 26th to Sunday September 29th.

The Gazette Matchplay Golf Tournament 2019

ENTRY FORM

Name:
Address:
Postcode: Date of Birth:
Daytime Tel: Evening Tel:
Mobile Tel No:
Email address:
Home Club:
Certified Club Handicap:
Full rules available on www.blackpoolgazette.co.uk
I enclose a cheque for the amount of £10 made payable to The Gazette
I have read/will read the rules and I agree to accept them
Signature: Date:
Send to: The Gazette Golf Competition, Promotions Department, Avroe House, Avroe Crescent, Blackpool FY4 2DP
Closing date Friday April 12th 2019.

Blacktax
01253
596 • 596
#friendly taxis

miles better