

Stage set for a thrilling return of rally spectacle

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This weekend's Legend Fires North West Stages Rally, in partnership with Simpson's Skoda and ND Civils, sees closed-road motorsport return to Lancashire following its suspension in 2020/21 because of the pandemic.

The rally, which aims to raise thousands of pounds for charitable causes, is going ahead thanks to the co-operation of Wyre Council, Lancaster City Council, Preston City Council, Lancashire County Council, Garstang Town Council and parish councils throughout the route.

Starting with a ceremonial start in Garstang town centre at around 6.30pm on Friday evening, the rally starts at 8.45 the following morning from its headquarters at Myerscough College.

Competitors will then head off for the special stages on closed roads, including the Nicky Nook Stage to the east of Garstang, which gets under way just after 10am and is repeated at 1.30pm and 5pm, with parking available at the Scorton Show Ground.

The Long Knotts Stage runs at 9.20am, 12.45pm and 4.10pm, with parking at Chip-ping Show Ground.

Friday's ceremonial start promises a carnival-style atmosphere, complete with the internationally-renowned Samba Espirito drum band of Notting Hill Carnival and New York Brazilian Day fame.

The band will play ahead of car 1 as it reaches the High Street, and leading crews will



Event sponsor John Stone of Blackpool South Shore Motor club in his VW Polo Picture: www.pro-rally.co.uk

be interviewed while awaiting their run over the start ramp.

Leading the field away at car 1 is 2019 European Rally Champion Chris Ingram in the Skoda Fabia Rally2, in which he is competing in this year's World Rally Championship.

Chris said: "I can't wait to compete back in the UK and to see the rally fans in

Garstang and on the stages."

Hambleton duo Simon Bowen and Richard Robinson, who won the 2016 rally, are seeded at car 10 in their Ford Fiesta S2000T.

Former World Rally Championship contender Neil Wearden, from Pilling, starts at car 29 in his Hyundai i20 F2.

Blackpool South Shore Motor Club member John Stone, whose company Legend Fires are the event's main sponsors, is seeded at car 8 in his VW Polo GTi R5, while Preesall's Neil Roskell starts one place ahead in his Ford Fiesta R5.

The similar car of Hambleton's Paul Murro and Cal-

lum Cross is seeded at car 33 and the Honda Civic of Blackpool's Benson brothers, Dave and Steve, is at car 62.

They are all among the hopeful contingent of competitors from South Shore Motor Club and from Garstang and Preston Motor Club hoping to go well on home ground.

They all face some tough competition, with the 125-car field having attracted some of the UK's top tarmac rally crews.

The final outcome will become known when the champagne sprays at the finish, which is scheduled to take place back on Garstang's High Street at 5.20pm on Saturday.

Pan-tastic fun for schoolchildren

Panathlon Challenge Events are a new feature of the Blackpool School Games Programme and have provided great fun for children.

The first event was a ten-pin bowling competition at the YMCA Bowl in Thornton, where the focus was on strikes, spares and turkeys.

Players from Highfurlong School, Park Community Academy and Waterloo Primary Academy took to the

lanes ready for an amazing afternoon.

Each bowler received their Panathlon medal and certificate, while extra prizes were awarded for most strikes, spares and the highest scores.

Overall winners Park Community Academy received a very handsome trophy and will go head-to-head with other North-West schools. Mr Powell from Waterloo Primary Academy was

top teacher.

The Panathlon series also saw multi-sports events take place at Blackpool Sports Centre for primary and secondary schools. The wide range of activities included golf, new age kurling, speed bounce, basketball, boccia, polybat and table cricket, enabling the participants to develop lots of new skills.

Young people from Baines Endowed, Layton, Westcliff,

St Nicholas, Park Community Academy, Devonshire and South Shore Academy got stuck into every challenge, all receiving individual awards.

Park Community Academy and South Shore Academy were the winners of the primary and secondary events respectively. Young leaders from Blackpool Sixth ensured the events ran smoothly, working with representatives of Team Panathlon.



Ten-pin bowling was part of the Panathlon Challenge for Blackpool schools