



LOCAL BOY: Mark McCulloch, right, from Newton Stewart and Craig Wallace of Kirriemuir will be trying to cause an upset in their Corsa.

From the start ramp at the Riverside car park in Newton Stewart, the competitors will head out to the first of five stages totalling 45 miles, including two in Glentool.

Three of the tests have not been previously used on the event in its current format and one of those, Palgowan, at just over three miles in length, has not been used for almost a decade.

With 78 road miles and a purpose-built central service area at Glencaird, the event is noted for being one of the most compact on the Hankook SRC calendar.

The "Merrick" will also count as a round of the Brick & Steel 205 Ecosse Challenge as well as the Borders Rally and Five of Clubs championships.

Who's Who

There is an entry of almost 100 cars for this year's Merrick Forest Stages and here are some of the leading names to look out for

- 2 Mike Faulkner, Kirtlebridge/Peter Foy, Bingley, Lancer EVO 6
- 3 David Bogie, Dumfries/Kevin Rae, Hawick, Toyota Corolla WRC
- 4 Jock Armstrong/Kirsty Riddick, Castle Douglas, Subaru Impreza
- 5 Euan Thorburn, Duns/Campbell Roy, Howwood, Subaru Impreza
- 6 Hugh Hunter, Ruthin/Andy Marchbank, Wirral, Ford Focus WRC
- 7 Andy Horne, Inverness/Jim Howie, Kilmarnock, DAM 4100 Gti
- 8 Jonathan Greer/ Belfast/ Mitsubishi Lancer Evo 9
- 9 Barry Groundwater, S'haven/Jude Wylie, Jedburgh, Lancer EVO9
- 10 Alick Kerr, Glasgow/Drew Sturrock, Laurencekirk, Subaru Impreza
- 11 Shaun Sinclair/Chris Hamill, Oban, Mitsubishi EVO9
- 12 Steve Bannister, Malton/Louise Sutherland, Hawick, Escort Mk2
- 14 Donnie MacDonald/Paul Beaton, Inverness, Mitsubishi EVO9
- 15 Frank Kelly, Moy/Jason Harron, Kesh, Ford Escort Mk2
- 16 John Morrison, Conon Bridge/Martin Forrest, Aberdeen, EVO9
- 17 David Hughes/Bruce Harper Dumfries, Mitsubishi Evo 9
- 18 David Wilson, Alness/Keir Beaton, Inverness, Mitsubishi EVO4
- 19 Seamus Donnelly, Ballyronan/Damien Duffin, Rasharkin, EVO
- 20 Jimmy Christie/David MacFadyen, Inverness, Mitsubishi EVO
- 21 Craig McMiken, Newton S./David Crisp, Leeming Bar, EVO9
- 22 Dale Robertson, Duns/Paul McGuire, Tranent, Mitsubishi EVO9
- 23 Douglas Brydon/David O'Brien, Duns, Mitsubishi EVO
- 24 Ian Paterson/David Paterson, Dumfries, Subaru Impreza
- 25 Malcolm Buchanan, Uig/Ian Nicoll, Forfar, Ford Escort Mk2

Stewards given zero option

The Scottish Rally Championship has confirmed that Jock Armstrong was excluded from the Gleaner Oil & Gas Speyside Stages. At the post-event scrutineering the Subaru Impreza of Jock Armstrong/Kirsty Riddick was found to be ineligible, due to the use of a "non-homologated rear differential".

This meant that the Hankook MSA Scottish Rally Championship stewards were required to call a hearing under MSA Regulation C(d)42. This hearing took place on the evening of

Tuesday, August, 25 and, in addition to the stewards, was attended by Jock and SRC co-ordinator, Robert Beck.

After reviewing the evidential paperwork from the event and taking into account a submission presented by Jock Armstrong, the stewards have judged that the crew will score "zero" Scottish Rally Championship points on the Gleaner Oil & Gas Speyside Stages in both the Overall and GpN categories and must count this "zero" as one of the scores contributing to their

Overall and GpN Championship totals. (MSA Yearbook C (d) 41.)

In addition, they will score "zero" Championship Class 10 points on the Gleaner Oil & Gas Speyside Stages and will also forfeit all relevant class 10 points retrospectively for the season - SRC 8.10 (b).

Chairman of the Scottish Rally Championship, Campbell Roy commented: "It is disappointing that there was no alternative solution available in this situation. I feel that the issue was clearly

one, which pertained to the car's eligibility for Class 10 and GpN. The fairest outcome would have seen Jock penalised in these categories but would not have affected his Overall Championship position.

"However, the regulations, as written, allowed the championship stewards no latitude in this matter. Perhaps it is something that requires further discussion with the MSA to enable a change to the MSA Yearbook, thereby avoiding a similar situation occurring in the future."