

Sport

Kerr takes another step towards Scottish title

TALENTED Bothwell teenager Alick Kerr underlined his potential as one of Scotland's most talented young rally drivers with a storming drive to beat two-time Scottish champion Andrew Wood on Saturday's RSAC Scottish Rally.

The 18-year-old, who is going for honours in both the County Saab MSA Scottish Rally Championship and the Brick and Steel 205 Ecosse Challenge this year, came out with all guns blazing on the Dumfries-based event, picking up maximum points in the 205 Challenge's 1.9 category and taking a big step towards securing the Scottish Junior Championship.

However, it wasn't all plain sailing for Kerr and his experienced co-driver Tom Hynd.

With Scottish rally legend and 205 Ecosse Challenge chairman Andrew Wood making a one-off guest appearance in a Challenge-specification Peugeot 205 GTi, Kerr was determined to seize the opportunity and show the rallying community what he could do.

Although some early punctures dropped Wood down the running order, Leaker Direct- and bagsonline.com-backed Alick kept up an impressive pace as he looked to hammer home the advantage in the 1.9 Challenge title race.

"We were terrified all afternoon that the car would break after we heard a mysterious rumbling in the morning," admitted Alick, who benefited from rival Ian Munro's retirement to move into a commanding championship lead. "We were driving very cautiously on the last stage, when, one kilometre in, we got a puncture. Tom and I knew that if Ian had got through OK he would have beaten us so it was an anxious wait at the finish."

A delighted Hynd said: "On Stage One, we took 15 seconds out of Andrew Wood's time. He might have claimed he backed off a bit but I don't care - we still took 15 seconds out of Andrew Wood!"



DRIVING FORCE: Alick Kerr beat two-time Scottish rally champion Andrew Wood.

At the 1.6 Challenge level, things didn't quite go according to plan for Crossford's Jonathan Smith on his return to the driving seat after a snowboarding accident.

Following a frantic search for a car to replace the vehicle that Jonathan's father Colin wrote off on the Jim Clark Reivers Rally, Smith junior took his place on the entry list in a machine which he had hired from fellow 205 Challenge campaigner Ross Hunter.

However, he and co-driver Drew Sturrock lasted just two stages before going out.

Team manager Jim Brown said: "We had planned to convert a 1.9-litre car we'd bought but decided it was too good to butcher and will use it for something else instead."

"Eventually we managed to hire a car from Ross but on the second stage Jonathan ran wide on a corner and ended up well off the road, up to his axles in mud."