



SQUARE LEFT

FEATURES

Scott Sloan on his miraculous comeback



Desi Henry was the happiest man in Carlisle. The Fabia R5 driver had just claimed a 38 second win on the DMACK Carlisle Stages, the fifth round of the 2016 BTRDA, ahead of Peter Taylor's Focus WRC with Jonny Greer's DS3 R5 completing the podium.

He headed back home to Northern Ireland with a grin, content with the fact he'd beaten a very strong field without putting a foot wrong.

Compare that to Scott Sloan. His trip home was a lot shorter, but his mood a lot more sombre and his trailer missing a significant ingredient: his car.

After puncturing the fuel tank on the event's second stage, his Vauxhall Corsa became a fiery wreck at the stop line, and after the fire extinguishers aboard had been used, there was nothing that could be done to save the car Sloan had started walking on five years earlier.

"I can remember being driven out of the woods when my car was still on fire, thinking to myself it would be at least five years until I would rally again," Sloan reveals.

"But now here I am! Not returning to the sport never even crossed my mind."

Rallying has never been about chasing trophies for Sloan, at least not yet. It's all about enjoyment.

"It's hard to say what exactly got me involved in rallying," he says.

"From as early as I can remember I have always had an interest in the sport.

"My dad has always been a rally fan and would take us to local events.

"When I was 14 I started auto testing and eventually made the jump to stage rallying five years later."



Despite always wanting to return, it all happened a bit quicker than he was expecting.

A crowdfunding page was set up by a fellow competitor and quickly raised over £1000, enabling Sloan to buy a new shell and get his rallying dream back on track.

"The rebuild itself started just five days after the fire when Malcolm Proudlock bought me the new body shell," he recalls.

"I did have to take some time off after the accident when things really got me down, the new car has predominantly been built during the nights.

"There were numerous problems throughout the build, mainly an electrical problem which took months to find and start up issues which lead to the big ends going just eight days before the season started!"

Twenty months after the disaster in Carlisle, Sloan is now back out in the forests, and has committed to both the Scottish Rally Championship and the BTRDA this season.

His 2018 campaign got underway with the Snowman Rally where he took a credible third in class, with the Cambrian Rally going less smoothly with the rough stages grinding his Corsa to a halt.

“My first two rallies back, despite being hampered by mechanical issues, have been amazing,” Sloan admits.

“The feeling after completing the first stage of the Snowman is something I’ll remember for a long time. I was almost crying at the ceremonial start in Inverness, it was a very emotional moment after all the hard work that’s been put in.”



With two rounds started and almost completed, Sloan is turning his attentions to improving his driving having got his eye back in.

“My plan going into the Malcolm Wilson Rally and the Border Counties is to have the mechanical issues sorted and try and have a good clean run through each stage.”

Watching years of hard work literally going up in smoke is bound to have an effect on any driver, but Sloan is using this previous heartbreak in a positive way moving forward.

“I think after the fire I definitely have a different perspective on my rallying,” he explains.

“For example our retirement on the Cambrian would previously have resulted in a long, sulking drive home whereas that weekend, despite retiring, I was just happy to be bringing my car back home with me in one piece.

“I don’t worry about the same thing happening again, it wouldn’t help if I did.

“I have thought about it and it’s in the back of my mind a lot, I try to make things as safe as I can.

“However when the green lights comes on it couldn’t be further from my mind.”

Sloan’s Corsa may not be the fastest car in UK rallying, but is surely one of the most sacred. The desire and determination to spring back from such a low is truly exemplary, making the Dumfries drive an instant fans’ favourite.

Now I think it’s time the rallying gods paid him a chunk of good fortune...