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NEWS

Ingram wins his ERC class in 'dream debut'



Chris Ingram won the ERC Junior Under-28 category on the Azores Airline Rallye yesterday on his way to fourth overall.

The Manchester driver had never driven a four-wheel-drive car in competition before the opening round of the European Championship, but used his previous experience of the Portuguese island to emerge victorious.

Ingram and co-driver Ross Whittock were scrapping with fellow Skoda Fabia R5 crew Martin Koci and Filip Schovanek, but beat second place and former British Championship front-runner Fredrik Ahlin by over a minute after Koci broke a wheel in the final stage.

"It's a dream debut for me, it's been awesome," Ingram said.

"I'm still learning the car and have worked so hard to be here so I'm really proud, but I'm gutted to miss out on an overall podium.

"We got a puncture on Friday and had a stall on Sete Cidades, losing 20 seconds, which is frustrating but the biggest challenge I faced was pace notes as they're for a two-wheel-drive car so aren't making much sense just now.

"[However] I can't complain because I've been fighting rally legends and have never competed in this car before."

Yates nets podium on ERC debut

Rhys Yates and Elliot Edmondson took eighth overall and third in the Junior Under-28 category at the wheel of a Skoda Fabia R5.

The Azores marked Yates' debut in the Fabia, the Azores Rallye, the European Rally Championship and was also his first time competing alongside Ingram's old co-driver Edmondson.

With all this considered, Yates is pleased with what was a “really good” weekend.

“It started well with a good time in qualifying,” he said.

“We had a few spins getting used to the new car but we’ve really enjoyed it.

“There is a lot of stuff that can catch you out and we had a few near-misses on the final stage, but I’ve enjoyed every minute of it, it’s been awesome.

“The car was absolutely spot on and Elliot [Edmondson] has been bang on. It was good to use his experience from last year.

“It was my first rally with Elliot, my first time in the Skoda and my first time on this rally so it’s been a really good weekend.”