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Another double victory for Driver Kasia Nicklin and Co-Driver Emma Morrison!

This weekend Europe's fastest racing circuit played host to the Rockingham Stages rally. The event consisted of 12 stages, including 2 night stages covering a total of 100 miles around Rockingham's super slick tarmac track, and was the final round of the Association of Eastern Motor Clubs (AEMC) Championship. After a successful year finishing every event on the podium Kasia was in joint second place with everything to play for in the Championship.

While bitterly cold there was thankfully no return of the snow and ice from last year. Both Saturday and Sunday started with the track wet and cold, with conditions steadily improving throughout the day. The cold slippery conditions suited her driving style so while several others made unscheduled visits to the gravel traps Kasia made good progress finishing stage one just a second behind the class leader. However, the team knew going into the event that a win would be difficult as they were up against the very successful car of Ian Barnard, who had earlier this year secured 2nd position in the B9, 1400 class of the MSA British Asphalt Rally Championship.

Having been seeded 54th from 61 cars, Kasia was delighted to end the first day and its' night stages 23rd overall, with a firm grip on 2nd in class. Sunday started cold and wet and very encouragingly she was fastest in class by 3 seconds, climbing to 21st overall, before the track started to dry; as the track dried, Barnard's car, with more power and a sequential gearbox was able to get this power down and extended his lead in the class.

Kasia in the Major Motorsport, Nissan Micra completed all 12 stages, finishing 2nd in the 1400 class, and 24th overall, also gained the Award for best Lady Driver.

Commenting afterwards Kasia said

"This was a fantastic way to complete the 2013 season, and I'm very proud to have won the Ward Construction, AEMC Championship (1400 Class) at my first attempt"

She went on to say

"I would like thank Bill Gwynne Rally School International for driver training, the MSA Academy for coaching and fitness development, my dedicated co-driver Emma Morrison and Major Motorsport for their meticulous preparation, set-up and service of the car [...] and I would also like to thank my School, King Edwards VI, for being so supportive in helping me to balance my sporting and academic commitments"

When asked about plans for next year Kasia commented

"We are still developing plans for next year, my aspiration is to compete in selected rounds of the British Rally Championship, but as always in motor sport this will be budget dependant"

Background

The St Edmundsbury Young Sports Personality of the year 2013 nominee, Kasia Nicklin, a 17 year old rally driver currently studying for her A-levels at King Edwards the VI High School, has been driving since she was 8 year old.

Kasia initially started racing in karts, competing in many club events and culminating in two seasons in the National Super One Karting Championship. By 13 years old she had set her sights on a move into cars, initially getting an MSA Race car license, and at 14 a MSA Rally license, she then made history in 2010 by becoming the youngest ever Driver to enter a British Stage rally aged just 14 years and 8 days old!

After three years in the Formula 1000 Junior rally championship, Kasia was selected for the Motor Sport Associations young driver development programme, the MSA Academy. In 2012 she was one of 26 talented young drivers to enrol on the development pathway for the most promising drivers in UK motor sport, the Advanced Apprenticeship in Sporting Excellence (AASE) run jointly by the MSA and Loughborough College. Essentially a sports science course for motor sport, it focuses on all of the human performance elements that combine to create successful drivers.

On completion of this Kasia was one of the five drivers chosen as finalists for the Racing Steps Foundation, Motor Sports Association Young Driver of the Year award 2013.

The winner of the RSF MSA Young Driver of the Year award 2013 was decided in a day-long shoot out event at iZone Driver Performance in the Silverstone Technology Park, during which they were assessed by a judging panel comprising: Robert Reid, MSA Performance Director; Ben Taylor, MSA Director of Development; Tom Onslow-Cole, MSA Performance Manager; Derek Walters, Racing Steps Foundation; Thomas Gayle, Loughborough College AASE NVQ Programme Leader; and Ben Anderson, national editor of Autosport magazine.

The activities included a variety of simulator challenges (including the innovative 'eye-tracker' software), gym assessment, reaction test and psychometrics, before each was interviewed by the panel.

Kasia thoroughly enjoyed the experience and whilst not the eventual winner was extremely proud to have got so far in a strong field of talented young British drivers.

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