

PICTURE OF THE WEEK



Ice 'n' easy does it: A driver struggles in the white stuff at the Snowman Rally in Inverness, won by local man Reay Mackay. Photograph: Peter Jolly

Mackay slides in to claim Snowman Rally

INVERNESSIAN Reay Mackay took full advantage of the treacherous snowy conditions, which turned the opening round of the Hankook Scottish Rally Championship into a lottery, to win his first major event.

Mackay, seeded 29th of the 130 starters, was fastest through two of the four stages in his MG Metro 6R4 on his way to winning the Inverness-based Snowman Rally by 60 seconds from fellow Invernessian Stephen Campbell's Mitsubishi. Jock Armstrong (Castle Douglas) was third in his Subaru just 11 seconds further back.

With deep snow covering all four stages – conditions were so bad the final stage, the five-miler at Glenurquhart was

cancelled – the early top-seeded drivers essentially acted as snowploughs clearing the route for later runners.

So bad were conditions that defending champion Jimmy Girvan (Inverness) dropped 25 minutes on the opening stage digging his Subaru Impreza out after he slid into a deep snowdrift.

Another to pay the price was Scotland's highly-rated youngster David Bogie. The Dumfries 21-year-old, third in the championship last year, dropped 55 seconds on the second stage at Millbuie when he opted to fit ice tyres to his Mitsubishi rather than snow tyres.

"Today was tough, very tough and in many ways it was a complete lottery,"

Bogie, who recovered to finish fourth, said. "To be honest it was an achievement just to get the car to the end of each stage."

Another youngster, 20-year-old Alex Kerr from Bothwell, stunned the established stars to win the first stage in his two-wheel-drive Ford Fiesta ST before going on to eventually finish a highly creditable 11th. But the happiest man was Mackay.

"Brilliant, just brilliant," the winner said. "To win any event is fantastic but to win my home rally is just a dream come true. I'm conscious we took advantage of the situation which hampered the top seeds, but we did what we had to do. Believe me, it's a great win."

JIM MCGILL