

## MK2 Evo Wins on its Debut Outing!

Major Motorsport's newest MK2 was showcased at the Autosport International Show in Birmingham earlier this year and received a huge amount of interest from fans and fellow rally competitors. The question on everyone's mind was how much better than the last Escort (FDL) would this one of a kind MK2 evolution be?

Simon and John took the machine to Blyton for a quick shake down on Tuesday, and everything seemed to be in order, so the Major Motorsport team braved the storm warnings and trekked down to the South coast for the South Down Stages on Saturday.

The weather conditions were just about the worst that any Escort driver could dread, with intermittent rain, hail and wind, tyre choices would have been a lot easier with a crystal ball, and so really every stage in the morning was a gamble.



Frustratingly, the choice of tyres on the first stage did nothing to help Simon and Melanie in their battle with the lack of grip on a circuit dusted with green moss and puddles. Combined with the fact that Simon had never driven this car in the wet before, made for a few interesting moments, and lots of sideways action! The crew returned into the service area unscathed, although they were 22 seconds off the lead.

The team spent the majority of the day altering set up and trying out tyre combinations, and slowly worked their way up the leader board and were closing up the gap to event leader, Jonnie Ellis who dominated the earlier stages in his 4 wheel drive car.

The battle with Paul King was fantastic throughout the event. Last years event winner, and regular Goodwood driver, Paul was the MK2 Escort driver to contend with. The two crews were swapping seconds on each stage! When the rain stopped midway through the day Simon and Melanie worked their way up into 2<sup>nd</sup> position, then into the lead with only the 2 night stages to go.

However, that was where the fun began! In the rush to get the new car out on the stage in time, spot lights hadn't been fitted to the new MK2, which meant Simon and Melanie going out to compete in the dark with nothing but the 2 Escort headlights to guide them through the night! Lining



up for the penultimate stage, the heavens opened once again! Melanie said *“SS9 was by far the worst conditions I have ever rallied in! We couldn’t see much anyway, but the rain made it nearly impossible! The whole circuit looked like a lake, we couldn’t distinguish wet track from deep puddles, which made for an interesting 100mph aquaplaning moment!”*

Amazingly, the crew put in another fast stage time to keep their lead, and played it safe on the very last stage, to bring the car home with a debut win!

Simon said *“I was really pleased with how the day went, we were mainly here to set the car up really, so to win the event was an unexpected bonus. The service crew today have been fantastic, and I can’t thank John Edwards enough for his input in the car”*



A full break down of results can be found here: <http://southdownsstages.co.uk/>