

Double trouble for teen Griffin

MATT Griffin suffered double trouble when he tackled two events in one weekend – 300 miles apart.

The Blackburn teenager was contesting the second round of the BTRDA Formula First Championship in Somerset, before a cross-country dash to Anglesey for the Lee Holland Memorial Stages.

After winning his class in the opening Formula First round, Griffin and co-driver Joe Cruttenden, were keen to extend their lead.

And it was all going to plan until the ninth stage when their Volkswagen Lupo hit a dip in the road at 80mph.

"The impact forced the bottom ball joint out of the front suspension," explained Matt, who is a student at Myerscough College, near Garstang.

"We had very little control of the car and ended up in the undergrowth stuck on tree stump. We managed to get the car off but then discovered that it had also pulled the driveshaft out. The car wasn't going anywhere and we had to wait until the end of the stage to be towed out.



ACTION: Blackburn's Matt Griffin races in his Volkswagen Lupo

"I'm disappointed to be out as we were looking to build on our great start on the Wydean, but it was only my second retirement in three years of rallying."

After a 300-mile drive overnight to North Wales, Griffin and Cruttenden lined up for the Lee Holland Memorial – in a different Volkswagen Lupo prepared by Shropshire Rallyschool.

"The day started well, but on the first run of the second stage we hit the one of the tyre chicanes and damaged the driver's side of the car, so much so that we couldn't open the door!" said Matt.

His service team managed to fix the car in time for the second run, and they completed the rally without further incident, finishing third in class and 20th overall.

Griffin's next outing will be round three of the Formula First Championship, the mid-Wales-based Plains Rally on May 15.

Busy Griffin

RALLYING: Blackburn's Matt Griffin has a busy weekend ahead, contesting the Somerset Stages on Saturday before travelling overnight for the Lee Holland Stages at Anglesey on Sunday.

"My aim on the Somerset Stages Rally is to build on my success at the Wydean Rally, but this won't be easy as there are new competitors entering the Rally First 1.4 championship and some are unknown quantities," said Griffin, who will drive two different Volkswagen Lupos.

Over 50 cars and crews will start the Lee Holland, which is organised by Pendle DMC. Other East Lancashire crews include Ross Butterworth/Jonathan Dixon (BMW), Steve Johnson/Dave Barratt (Nissan Micra), Ross Miller/Grant Williams (Peugeot 206GTi).