

Griffin targets rally top spot

RALLY: Blackburn's Matt Griffin (pictured) gets his BTRDA campaign into gear this weekend, contesting the opening round, the Wyedean Forest Rally, on Saturday.

The 19-year-old Myerscough College student finished second overall in the BTRDA Rally First Championship last season - but he's aiming to go one better this year.



"I'm using the same car and co-driver I had last year in the hope that it will give me some much-needed consistency," explained Matt, who lives in Wilpshire.

Matt's Volkswagen Lupo has been prepared by his mentor, Shropshire Rallyschool owner John Goff.

Based at Chepstow racecourse, this year's Wyedean consists of 45 stages miles in the Lower Wye Valley and Forest of Dean.



Pinchin: top tip for 1400s

Pinchin set to lead the way in 1400s

Having achieved his dream of winning all three BTRDA titles, Millers Oil 1400 champion Graham Middleton won't defend his crown this year - but there will still be plenty of competition for the title.

Darren Pinchin, who won the crown in 2008, is returning in his Proton Satria Kit Car, and will be out to make amends after running Middleton close last year.

One of his challengers is a bit of a surprise: Fiesta Sport Trophy ace Matt Edwards has hired the MG ZR Callum Black used last year for the Wyedean Rally.

"I had a budget to do two rounds of the British Rally Championship in a four-wheel-drive car but I felt that money would be better spent doing a full BTRDA campaign," said Edwards, who finished third overall on the Cambrian Rally in 2008 in a Mitsubishi Lancer E9.

Edwards will also be a tough contender for the one-make MG ZR Challenge.

Black has signed up for the Wyedean, but is set to focus on the BRC Challenge this year.

Another interesting entrant is Dave Bennett, who blitzed Rally First in 2008 and '09, and steps up to the main 1400 class in his Corsa.

That leaves '09 Rally First runner-up Matt Griffin as the favourite for glory in the class.

The class-based two-wheel-drive only MSA English Rally Championship runs alongside the England-based BTRDA Rally Series, with the Trackrod and Tempest rallies thrown in.

Jon Ballinger won the title last year, but with class-based scoring it's a wide-open field.