

Sport



Wheeler rolls to the championship

MOTORSPORT

RICHARD HUGHES

CHRIS WHEELER, the Torquay rally driver, is celebrating after being crowned the Class RF1.6 champion for 2015 at the Cambrian Rally in Wales.

The Champagne was flowing for Wheeler and his team after the 21-year-old and his co-driver Yan Griffiths finished in an ailing car following a dramatic crash – but still clear of anyone threat to their title pretensions.

They rolled their car down a slight slope in the first stage but with the aid of spectators were able to continue in the race. However, the young driver was slightly shaken up.

“It took me a couple of stages to get back into the swing of things,” said Wheeler.

“All we had to do was finish this Rally to win our class championship so the pressure to finish was high.

“After Stage 4 we had a 30-minute main service in which the service crew did there utmost to repair the car and get us back out for the afternoon stages.

“As each stage went by & I was



ROUGH TERRAIN: Chris Wheeler and Yan Griffiths take on the Cambrian Rally in Wales. Wheeler rolled the car but won the championship

counting down every mile to the finish line.

“I wanted the championship victory so badly!

“To end the Rally there was a 2.8 mile tarmac stage called Great Orme. This stage is one of the most famous Rally stages in Wales.

“We set off and corner by corner we flew through – battling our way with a damaged car all the way to the finish line.

“When we passed the red finish boards, the celebrations began – it was a huge relief!

“Once we got back to the crew the celebrations began and the champagne was sprayed!

“I cannot thank my team and sponsors enough for everything they have done this year to get me and Yan to the end.”

Wheeler is hoping to move up a class next year and this championship will be a selling point as he tries to muster more sponsorship during the winter.

As well as the Class RF1.6 title, Wheeler was also second in Vital Equipment Junior Driver and third in the Vital Equipment Rally First categories.