

Thursday, July 31, 2008

## Team McShea Will Fly The Flag For Multiple Sclerosis Awareness At X-GAMES 14



Niall McShea [r] and co-driver Marshall Clark will represent, Team MS RACING at X-GAMES 14 this weekend in LA. Picture Subaru Rally Team USA.

By Neil McDaid

By taking the overall victory at the Maine Forest Rally on July 12, Ireland's Niall McShea and navigator Marshall Clark grabbed the last qualifying spot at the X-GAMES 14 Rally, which will take place in Los Angeles July 30-August 3.

The dust had barely settled on the Maine stages before negotiations were underway to secure a car and funds to make sure that McShea would be able to take his place at the Games. Subaru USA was the first to step up with a car and some sponsorship for McShea.



Even at 107mph, on his beloved 1967 Triumph TR6, this Irish American with ties to Co. Kerry has trouble staying ahead of Multiple Sclerosis. Nonetheless, Jim Haraughty vows to continue his race for awareness and a cure (Thomas Graf)

The same group of Irish businessmen from Pearl River, New York who brought McShea to Maine, would come through again with additional sponsorship to make up the balance. McShea will pilot the latest open class 2008 Subaru STI, prepared by Vermont Sports Car at the Games.

With the X-GAMES being televised to millions around the world and just as many again when it hits the very popular website YouTube, Team McShea felt it would be a great opportunity to donate space on the car to a worthy cause. Team McShea will display the Team MS Racing decals on the car, giving much needed exposure to the fight against Multiple Sclerosis (MS).

Team MS Racing and Team MS Foundation were founded by Jim Haraughty of Monona, Wisconsin. Jim and his wife Kathleen [nee, Gallagher] have ties to both Kerry and Donegal. In 2003, at the age of 45, Jim was diagnosed with Multiple Sclerosis, November 12, to be exact, "It's a date that is etched in my mind," says Jim.

Jim had been very active all his life, started out as a tennis instructor who turned semi-pro and then was an avid motorcycle racer and cyclist. After being so active, he struggled with the early stages of the disease. "There were days when I just wanted to stop and not get out of bed. It's on these bad days when you need to dig deep and stay active, and not become a lump. If you don't, MS wins." MS can affect your emotions as well as important cognitive functions like memory and concentration.

People with MS often experience devastating losses-for example of the ability to work, to walk, or even to engage in simple leisure activities.

With a lack of knowledge about the disease Jim's passion for life and family pushed him to explore every possible piece of information on MS. He quickly found out that that information on drugs and treatment was not so readily available.

As Jim began his many different treatments he came up with the idea for Team MS Racing. It was the start of his race against MS, a race to gain awareness, and more so a race to research and a cure.

Jim also started Team MS Foundation which works to assist people living with Multiple Sclerosis in their quest to remain active. It's important for people with Multiple Sclerosis to participate in life by remaining active; it's an essential element in living with the disease. But, Multiple Sclerosis can be a financial hardship that limits this necessary activity.

Team MS Foundation grants are awarded to individuals and members of families who live with, and deal with, Multiple Sclerosis in their lives to help keep them active.

Among his many goals for the team, Jim wanted to set an example that an active lifestyle is not something that needs to be given up while with living with MS. Over the past few years Team MS Racing's efforts on the American Historic Motorcycling circuit have attracted the attention of many in the motorsports

community to the struggles of those with MS.

Despite dealing with the everyday challenges of MS, in 2007 Jim tackled a world record attempt at the infamous Bonneville Salt Flats on a production class 1967 Triumph TR6 motorcycle. With the bike stuck in third gear, Jim broke the record for the class reaching 107mph. Unfortunately, with the gearbox toast he could not make a second pass so the record did not hold.

Despite his disappointment at not getting the record, Jim's effort caught the attention of one of the USA's largest motorcycle magazines, Motorcyclist. The magazine ran a story on the racer with MS, bringing MS awareness to their large reader base. For Jim it was "mission accomplished."

All going well Jim hopes to be able to have another crack at a record this year.

I spoke with Jim this week and asked him about getting some exposure for Multiple Sclerosis at the X-GAMES. "It's beyond excitement! I can't thank Niall and his supporters enough for giving Team MS Racing some space on the car. It's a dream come true."

Jim continues to battle new issues with MS with every passing day, but he also continues to add to his list of to-do's - "to keep the race alive, grabbing this life by the horns. And, I need to get a ride in one of these rally cars - I think I could navigate. " I am sure that could be arranged!

Somewhere among the glitz and commercial hype of the X-GAMES, Niall McShea will do his thing as a driver. He'll battle it out with defending X-GAMES Rally champion

Tanner Foust, the crazy car jumping Ken Block and Mr. X-GAMES himself, Travis Pastrana.

Regardless of the final result, Team McShea is already winners to those battling and living with Multiple Sclerosis around the world.

All going well he will also have brought just a little more awareness to the race against this disease.

The X-GAMES Rally will be shown live on ABC television between 3-6pm Eastern. Check your local listings for times in your area.

For More info: [www.teamms.org](http://www.teamms.org), [www.rally-america.com](http://www.rally-america.com) ,  
<http://rally.subaru.com/index.html>