

Airtime

FREE
NOV 2004

BRITISH COLUMBIA'S RALLY UPDATE



Norm Leblanc and Paul DeLeeuw, WCRA members and
2004 Canadian Novice National Champions

Pacific Forest Rally
Totem TSD Rally
National Championship Changes
VMCC Mini Fall Rally

Team M45 debuts at PFR

By Martin Chung



Pacific Forest Rally 2004 in Merritt, BC, was our first stage rally event. Christa and I first teamed up over the Internet, sight unseen, in June, 2003. We came in first in our class in our first TSD rally together, a great start to a very successful rally partnership, resulting in the formation of Team M45 Rallysport and our recent showing at PFR.

Having similar goals, we had intended to move to stage rally together on some vague future date. I had purchased my 1.8L Subaru Impreza with the intention that someday it would be prepared for stage, but little did I know that it would be less than a year later that I would be ripping out all the interior trim in preparation for the roll cage work.

We decided in July to ready the car and team for PFR 2004 in October. The hard deadline would help keep our efforts focused. What followed was a flurry of activity trying to get the car completed. The most insignificant decisions involved huge amounts of thought, research, time, and of course, money. From how to fabricate the seat brackets, to the cage design, to the location of the first aid kit, which suits and helmets to buy, everything took much more effort than imagined, especially when you have to do much of the work yourself.

Many times I wondered if I should have bought a prepared car as is the usual advice, to save myself the mental anguish someone else had already gone through. On the other hand, I felt good knowing that I had been involved in every detail of the car's construction and that I hadn't compromised on safety. I had also learned an immense amount.

Several days before we had to leave the car's competition logbook hadn't been issued, the required rollcage padding hadn't arrived from the U.S., and our competition licenses hadn't arrived in the mail. As I was fully engrossed in completing the car, I was lucky that Christa and the rest of the crew took care of logistics such the trailer, crew, tools, spares, and tow vehicle. The car was completed the night before we left for Merritt and we had our licenses in hand, but the car still did not have a logbook.

On Friday we ran recce over the route. Having never done pace notes, we based our technique from my countless hours playing Colin McRae Rally on the Xbox, and it improved steadily through the day. That evening was scrutineering, my most nervous time of the entire event. I wondered if I'd overlooked something major in the preparation that would disqualify us from competing the next day after all the trouble getting to this point. We passed, the logbook was issued, and a huge weight was lifted off my shoulders. We'd be competing the next day!

We had no butterflies or jitters on the day of the rally. The numerous gravel TSD rallies we'd competed in had been invaluable for preparing us for this day, allowing us to settle into our regular competition mode. From our first-ever start to the final finish, we kept things light, punctuated with fun and laughter, and drove a quick, but conservative pace. There was a sense of freedom and safety in knowing that there would be no surprise vehicles coming over the next crest and we were wearing harnesses, helmets, and suits while encased in a steel safety cage.

The rally route ran through narrow, twisty, tree-lined meadows or wound down the sides of the mountains bordered by drop-offs to one side and rock walls on the other. It rained the morning of the rally, which, combined with loose gravel and thin layers of mud on top of a harder surface made for very slick forest roads. This kept the speeds and times down through the twistier and more technical morning stages. The afternoon stages were longer and faster, and the speeds rose as the course dried out. Our notes for the later stages were better, so I began to trust the notes more and we got into a good rhythm.

We finished the rally, which was our primary objective. Considering that 11 of the 33 teams that entered did not finish the rally at all due to various issues like mechanical problems and going off-road, this was a huge achievement for our very first stage rally. We also achieved our second objective, which was not to finish in last place. To our delight, we came in second in our class and 13th overall out of 23 in the regional competition. We had been seeded in 33rd (last) place because it was our first rally, and we steadily moved up the leaderboard. It was an amazing experience to be running in the same events with notables like Richard, McGeer, and Olsen. We were also thrilled to be recognized at the awards ceremony for having finished our very first rally.

Without our sponsors we would not have been able to compete at PFR, and we would like to thank them for partnering with us on this event. Our service crew of three (Matt, Rich, and Scott) was very well prepared and took great care of the vehicle during the service breaks. Having now experienced working and competing at a rally I now realize more than ever the immense contributions from all the organizers and volunteers who make the day go smoothly for the competitors and I would like to offer them my deepest thanks as well.



Martin Chung and Christa Monasch are the driver and co-driver of Team M45 Rallysport, a BC-based TSD and stage rally team. Their website can be found at www.m45rallysport.com.

by Ron Sorem

Totem TSD Rally 2004

The West Coast Rally Association presented a spectacular mix of scenic roads, varying conditions and terrain, wrapped into a two-day package called The Totem Rally. First presented in 1962, this would be Version 2004.

The weather was questionable: Would there be "enough" snow? Web forums teased with snowy photos, reports of slush, mud, and ice, and of impassable water hazards.

Saturday morning's drivers' meeting brought the news that there would indeed be snow, but no snow banks to soften landings for errant cars ("winter-roads-summer-ditches"). There would also be mud, some icy mud, some snow over ice, some fresh snow over compact snow, and some dry gravel. Typical Totem. Road and weather conditions in Central British Columbia are unpredictable in November and provide arguably the most varied and difficult Time-Speed-Distance rally roads in North America.

The RallyMaster/Organizer team of Fred and Shelley Wiedemann sent 25 cars out onto the back roads south, then west of Cache Creek, for the Hat Creek Regularity, with the note to expect very icy conditions 12km into the first section. This notation seemed improbable as the section begins with a dusty uphill hairpin at 62km/h. The first checkpoint is hidden in the mix of pine trees, white-barked birch, and a blanket of yellow foliage. A moment or two later reality and concentration focus on the instruction: "Caution!!! Exposure left". (Single cautions ! are generally interpreted as corners or hazards that if ignored may cause you delay, double !! may cause damage to your car, triple !!! may cause damage to your person.) The dust is gone, the road is now rutted sticky mud. As the rally gains elevation through the conifer forest and crests a ridge there is snow, and a checkpoint, just short of the 12km mark at "Hairpin R Caution!! Exposure next 500km". Then, executing a series of hairpins on ice, dropping dramatically off the ridge there is another checkpoint, this one in a hairpin left.

With only a brief time to "relax" from the ice, competitors began a steady elevation gain within the rolling hills and valleys of Upper Hat Creek Ranch (...were those caribou?). Punctuated by "Caution!!! Road goes Right over crest with Exposure L", speeds are up to 68km/h here through the ranch, then dropping steadily, we pass two more checkpoints, to Highway 99 and the transit west through scenic Marble Canyon to Pavillion.

Pavillion-Clinton TSD begins with a steep switchback climb through several long hairpins at 52, then tops out into more ranchland at 72. Another drivers' meeting warning was here at 14km into the section: "Slow Down! Very Slippery!" The instruction read: "Hard Left - Caution!! Off Camber downhill! Straight ahead is not an option!" As the checkpoint crew for this corner was setting up, a wood cutter lost control of his pickup and trailer coming UP through the corner. Jack-knifed into the apex he was well and truly stuck, leaving only a narrow passage on the outside of the corner. The checkpoint crew's triangle warned on-coming rally cars, causing even slower approaches than intended. Managing to get past the big Ford's front bumper, noticing the checkpoint and cameraman, anxious teams would later be relieved to find the checkpoint would not be scored due to the congestion. The remainder of the section was Hairpin after Hairpin for 4km, down to two picturesque mountain lakes southwest of Clinton.

Big Bar Road to Dog Creek TSD covered 61.78km at a brisk pace northward past several guest ranch and resort areas with three checkpoints on the western-most loop of the rally.

A short transit brought the rally to the longest TSD of the day at 88.62km. Big Bar Road to 100 Mile House contains wet gravel, snow in the corners in the shade, rutted mud (think chocolate pudding), and snow over ice. At various points, the front runners all admitted to being very late, and luckily nearly every one was able to recover before the next checkpoint. That is, all but one team, who missed an instruction, were seven minutes late at one point, and after finding their mistake could only make up three minutes before a control and effectively the end of their hopes at a decent score. (Exhibiting great sportsmanship, this team volunteered to work checkpoints on Day Two.



Fuel and snacks in 100 Mile House, then north to Spring Lake TSD where the second leg of the rally begins eastward past Canim Lake. Spring Lake is a moderate to brisk 25.84km regularity, roughly split in half by a slower twisty section covering 4km at 32, and closing with just under 8km at 68.

The last TSD of the day is usually well populated by all the checkpoint crews that have been spread over the countryside, now concentrated in a smaller area. Totem was no exception, with six controls in 56km, including two within 2km - Pay Attention!! - and, the last checkpoint less than 2km from the end.

Wells Gray Inn at Clearwater was the overnight headquarters affording choices of quiet dining, spirited celebration, and a live band. Scores for Day One were tight, with a tie for first with SIX points. (Tie breaker would have been 18 zeroes each, then two ones each, then two twos each, etc, etc. Absolute zeroes went to car 1 with 9, over car 5 with only 8.)

Day Two drivers' meeting presents several notes about the route including a mention of snow scraping the bottom of the car for 5km on the second regularity, and a small tree across the road (too big to move, but not too big to drive over). The transit leaves Clearwater due south toward Kamloops and soon provides a stop in Little Fort for food and fuel, before the rally climbs steeply up Boulder Mountain. In the valley it is raining, but soon becomes mixed rain and snow over mud, snow in the shaded corners, and eventually settles for gravel mixing long straights with twisty sections through the trees. We were warned of cows and golf carts on the road, but both seemed to have sense enough to find shelter elsewhere from the near freezing drizzle.

A very short transit just north of Barriere takes us to the rally's first real test on snow. 85km Lake Road TSD begins with a steep gravel climb into the snow, hairpins, and a control. As the route winds through a recent forest fire area the snow deepens and of course the speed increases. The front running cars are all All-Wheel- or Four-Wheel-Drive and concentrate on tweaking the computers for "zeroes". Further back in the two-wheel drive group, the concentration is just to stay on the road. One did not. The resultant extrication (no damage, just late) delayed several cars.

Shortly after passing the third checkpoint of the section, speeds increase to 62, 68, 58, and back to 68 for nearly 30km of smooth open road, with only a few "non-rally" vehicles. A 90 right across a bridge is "a bit icy". But the next "KL, Caution! Tight" is just an ice rink and of course, the road immediately begins to climb. Wheel spin, no hard-points for odo correction, and a checkpoint, keep drivers and navigators busy.

(continued page 5)



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From The Land of the Rising Sun to Middle Earth

By Brian Wende



The Tour de Kyushu, which was the 1st Round of the 2nd Japan Rally Championship, held April 9-11. In the Japan Rally Championship, there are two separate championships, one for the 2wd, an all tarmac series and the other championship consists of gravel, which both 2wd and 4wd cars can compete. This event was a two-day tarmac event with 17 stages. There was 45 cars entered in the rally, which had three classes, cars were seeded in reverse order, factory teams start from cars 32-45. The car that we used was a 2wd Honda Integra Type R (car #31), and competed in the B-class. The driver was Toshihiro Takeshita of the Matsuyama Auto Club. During Day 1, the car was quick and being the first rally on tarmac, the stages went well and the pace notes were good. The roads were very technical and there wasn't much room for error, and tire choice was important. Stage 5 was cancelled, as two cars went off. We got a chance to drive the stage at a slower speed, to get to stage 6, which gave us a chance to check the notes as we would run this stage later in the evening. During stage 6, we had problems with 3rd gear and lost some time, finishing the day in 14th position. Day 2 stages were a repeat of Leg 1 on Day 1, and we were quick, and made back some time that we lost, and finished the rally in 12th position. It was excellent learning experience, and I had a wicked time!

The next rally that I co-drove in was the Hella Battery Town Rally of Rotorua, on July 9-10 in New Zealand. This is the 3rd round of the Asia-Pacific Rally Championship and the Parker ENZED New Zealand Rally Championship. The team is the SAS Kenshindenso Rally Team and the driver is Hideaki Ito of Japan, and the car will be a Subaru Impreza WRX STi ver6, Group A. The FIA Asia-Pacific Rally Championship is established as one the premier regional rally championship in World Rallying. The FIA Asia-Pacific Rally Championship runs in accordance with the SUPERally format, a concept planned for the 2005 FIA World Rally Championship. In accordance with the regulations, a competing car which fails to finish any leg of a rally will be permitted to restart the next leg, assuming it has not been excluded on the grounds of technical ineligibility. At the end of an event, points are awarded for the overall general classification, as well as for each championship, on the same points scoring system as the FIA WRC – namely 10, 8, 6, 5, 4, 3, 2 and 1 point respectively for first to eighth position.



However, bonus points are also awarded at the end of each leg, with the first, second and third placed crews amassing 3, 2 and 1 point respectively for their positions in the overall and championship classifications. The Motu Road gorge in the Eastern Bay of Plenty will be run as two consecutive special stages totaling 46 kilometres of competitive driving, which is widely regarded as the worlds most challenging rally stage. The Motu stage was made famous during the 1990's when it formed part of the New Zealand round of the WRC. The stage is winding and twisting its way from the coast of Opotiki to the township of Motu. New Zealand gravel roads are smooth and have rhythmic camber changes, which makes for very quick, fast flowing roads. But unfortunately we had to withdraw from the rally after finishing the reconnaissance. It was a team decision after we had an accident on the way home from reconnaissance.

The next rally that I attended was Rally Japan, the 11th round of the World Rally Championship, on September 3-5 in Hokkaido. Helping do service for the SAS Kenshindenso Rally Team. It was an exciting rally, with Petter Solberg and Phil Mills winning overall for Subaru.



National Championship Changes

Subaru Rally Team Canada Retires

Mississauga, ON – After 12 years of competition in the Canadian Rally Championship Series, where Subaru has won the Canadian Manufacturers' Championship for the past five consecutive years and six times in total, Subaru Canada Inc. has decided that it will not compete in the 2005 season.

According to Brian Hyland, director, sponsorships and distribution for Subaru Canada, Inc., "There were a lot of factors that led to this decision. Subaru invested a great deal of money and much effort in the series over the past six years while we were the title sponsor. We also tried to assist the sanctioning body, the Canadian Association of Rallysport (CARS) in every way we could to make this a more viable proposition for sponsors, event organizers and competitors alike."

Subaru has sponsored or presented the championship series along with Yokohama from 1998 until 2003. This year Subaru was the primary financial contributor to the series because Yokohama decided not to continue its association with CARS after the 2003 season. "Because there was no other major sponsor this year, Subaru's costs increased dramatically," Hyland said. "Along with the costs associated with running the team, it became nearly prohibitive, but Subaru would have continued if there had been a solid marketing plan in place for 2005 from CARS that included additional sponsors."

One of Subaru's concerns had been the series' lack of a professional marketing approach. In 2003, CARS made an effort to put together a marketing company to promote the National series, but it did not last the full year. For 2004, Subaru insisted that a solid marketing plan had to be developed in order for it to continue. Subaru worked in conjunction with Jud Buchanan and Keith Townsend, who formed Rally Development Group (RDG), a marketing and promotions company. Its goal was to work with all of the individual rally event organizers to increase the professionalism and overall image of the series and to bring more sponsors into the series.

In January of this year, RDG and CARS entered into a five-year marketing and broadcast rights agreement. RDG took over marketing of the series and CARS continued to look after all the regulatory aspects of the sport. "We knew Buchanan and Townsend from both rallying and other business associations," Hyland explained. Buchanan was the former motorsport manager for Yokohama Tires and Operations manager for CASCAR, while Townsend has been the organizer of the Rally of the Tall Pines for a number of years. "We were really shocked when CARS terminated its agreement with RDG, especially after all the positive comments from competitors and organizers about the great things that they had seen happen in 2004 and the fact that RDG was in final negotiations to bringing another major sponsor on board for the 2005 season."

"I spoke with both CARS and ASN/ FIA about the situation. They reviewed the situation with RDG, but the difficulties could not be resolved. Without a strong marketing approach to the series, it doesn't make sense for Subaru to continue to put money into it. We need to see a return on our investment"

The withdrawal from the sponsorship and the decision to not field a team for the 2005 season does not mean that Subaru's 13-year association with rallying in Canada will end. Hyland said, "We will continue to be involved with the sport but to what extent, we can't currently say. We will definitely be there with a contingency programme for all the Subarus currently competing."

Subaru has won the most Manufacturers' titles in the series history. It has won multiple championships in many of the series classes, eight overall Canadian Drivers Championships, as well as many North American Rally Cup Championships.

www.subarurallyteam.com

CARS Terminates RDG Agreement

INFORMATION BULLETIN #1 - November 18, 2004

A year ago, CARS entered into a five year marketing and broadcast rights agreement with Rally Development Group (RDG). Included in the wording of the agreement was a one time option to terminate the agreement at the end of the first year. The primary aim of the agreement was to secure long term commercial sponsorship stability for the Canadian Rally Championship. In addition, RDG had presented a very desirable program for both the development of the sport and its promotion.

During the first ten months of the agreement, three shortcomings in the agreement became more acute and a unanimous CARS Board decision was made to present to RDG with a request for changes to the agreement. The three changes CARS asked for concerned respectively, a shortcoming of the agreement, a means of improving the working relationship between RDG and CARS and, lastly, the financial stability of CARS. The rationale for the changes was as follows:

1. In the agreement, there was no protection for either CARS or RDG in case of failure of either party. CARS was exposed to possible legal difficulties if RDG were to fail or get in difficulty during the life of the contract and the assigned rights given to RDG could pass to others or be held beyond the reach of CARS. As well, RDG was exposed to fulfilling all financial commitments even if an event in the championship did not run. The wording of the first change was an attempt to address CARS's issues and would have been expanded to address RDG exposure.
2. The second change was designed to relieve some of the strain that existed between CARS and RDG in the first year of the agreement. The change asked for increased communication, on a confidential and timely basis, on matters relating to sponsor negotiations and media campaigns.
3. The third change was an attempt to help put CARS on a secure financial path. During the first year of the agreement, CARS received approximately 2% of the total budget to which RDG was committed. CARS did not ask for new money to be added to the budget, but that already existing funds be reallocated from other aspects. The amount being asked for would bring the total payable to CARS to less than 5% of the total budget. CARS is currently operating in a very serious deficit position and to continue the agreement without a financial solution would result in the financial collapse of CARS before the end of the agreement.

The decision to exercise the option was made by majority vote when efforts to negotiate three changes to the agreement were rejected by RDG, at 7:15 pm. The rejection was without explanation and came twenty-four hours after RDG first received them. This was less than five hours before the option to terminate would expire and the agreement would have become binding on both parties for four years. Friday evening contact attempts by the CARS president went unanswered. At 11:00 pm on Friday, November 12, 2004, CARS, with great reluctance, informed RDG that CARS wished to exercise its option to terminate the CARS-RDG Marketing and Broadcast Rights Agreement. Included in the notification of exercising the option to terminate was an offer to rescind the notification if a settlement of the three requested changes could be negotiated. The decision to terminate the CARS-RDG Marketing and Broadcast Rights Agreement was a difficult one to make because of the desire of the entire CARS board to continue with the agreement to allow the good work started by RDG to continue to prosper in the four remaining years of the agreement.

CARS wishes to assure its member clubs and their members, organizers and competitors as well as its present sponsors that there will be a Canadian Rally Championship in 2005 and beyond. One of the first acts in the coming days will be to establish a relationship with a marketing company with an eye to improving the commercial side of the sport. However, CARS will pursue all sponsor possibilities that present themselves in the immediate future.

www.carsrally.ca

Totem TSD continued...

Not knowing exactly where the timing line is, we show 2-early at the entrance, on-time at the bridge, and 2-late at the exit. Unable to correct our factors in time, we would later find we were 5-early—driver having too much fun? We recover composure for the last checkpoint at zero, however the first hairpin in the snow (late) and the double-left (early) will more than double our first day score.

A few minutes later we are caught by our "twin", I see my own car in my rear view mirror. Alas, no road fatigue hallucination, it is only a checkpoint crew in an identical car trying to regain their position ahead of the field after missing a turn earlier. They pass, and my thought is they may actually make it with only four more cars to go. They may also prepare any local traffic for me... for better or for worse! (We never saw them again until the finish, learning they had made yet another wrong turn and followed coincidental, but wrong, instructions for several minutes toward Tranquille.)

"KL at Red Lake DR" brings back a vague memory of rallies past. On previous Totem and Thunderbird, this section of road has been used uphill in the mud, uphill in ice, and downhill in snow over ice over mud. The first corner downhill is: "Caution!!! Hard R Exposure L". It is a very long drop into the valley below. Previous years' speeds have been 24km/h and difficult to maintain. This year 36km/h is tame, but there are muddy spots and no hard-points for nearly 3km. The traditional checkpoint location at the last hairpin is surprisingly vacant. Could this be where our "twin" was supposed to be?

Shortly after the drop into the valley, rally cars were treated to close-ups of cows. Throughout the two days there had been cautions to watch for cows on the road. All previous encounters had been casual, at a distance. Now, however, even after course-opening cars and several rally cars, these big white-faced Herefords had not given up their claim for the road. 44km/h into a cow is not an option, so ever so slowly, we crept between cows—their heads lowered, nostrils still above the side mirrors, we passed. The ear tag on the closest one read "100" on it's right ear and "26" on it's left ear (thanks Satch) and thankfully no slobber on the side windows.

The last 23km of the 95km TSD are familiar to Totem and Thunderbird alike: The westward climb to maximum elevation, the two or three "likely" checkpoint locations, and the hairpin switchbacks south down to the highway. With this year's dry conditions the conversation drifted off to commentary on topics such as "Glenn's second corner", "RJ's corner", "Ron's corner", "Jeff's corner" and so on... We've paid attention to the route book, to the road, and to the clock. We take a zero for 94.92km, but will it be enough? Three other cars would do the same. Previous indiscretions have taken their toll, however, and we move from tied for first to tied for third, a whole 4 seconds out of the lead.

Lee and Rod Sorenson, brothers (and our teammates) from the Sacramento area would repeat their 2003 Totem win for First Overall with 11 in Lee's RS2.5. Perennial driving threat, fresh from an Alcan 5000 win, Gary Webb from Arizona, and John Kisela from Seattle, would take Second with 14 in John's Legacy. Third Place tie was between Ron Sorem and Max Vaysburd, from the Seattle area, in a Legacy Turbo, and RJ and Ren Carroll, son and father team from Kamloops, in Ren's WRX. The tie was broken by most zeroes, 29 for Ron and Max versus 27 for RJ and Ren, still very, very close. RJ and Ren will take First Unlimited and First Overall in the 2004 BC TSD Rally Championship.

First Calculator/Equipped went to Martin Chung and Christa Monasch with 28 in the bright red stage rally Impreza, also taking First Calculator in the BC Championship. Second Calculator/Equipped went to Jeff McMillen and Marvin Crippen with 51 in a WRX, despite having no odo sender for Day Two, and running a back-up system that had added kms erratically. Jeff and Marvin will repeat as PCC Champions for 2004.

Paper and Pencil class (SOP) again went to Dan and Stu Fealk with Dan keeping their Subaru XT6 on the course and Dad doing the calcs. Dan and Stu will take First Paper in the BC Championship.

In yet another tie at 247, First Historic Equipped went to Mike Palm and Garth Hales in the 1973 Super Beetle, and First Novice went to the Calgary team of Johnny Summers and Brendan Youngberg in Brendan's 2005 Impreza RS – ON THEIR FIRST RALLY! They have already been heavily recruited for Novice team members at Thunderbird.

First Historic went to Richard Childs and Helen Welter, making the trek from Alberta in the 1974 BMW 2002tii to also wrap up their season try for First Historic in the BC Championship. However, William McRae and Dave Harms Second Historic at Totem in the 1969 VW Beetle was just enough to win the BC series by TWO points.

Our "twin" was Shawn Edstrom and Geoff Gauthier from Kamloops, who worked this event, but will be awarded First Novice for the 2004 BC TSD Championship.

Series sponsor Specialty Subaru must be enthusiastic over the 13 Subaru competitors and 3 more Subaru checkpoint cars, representing the manufacturer.

Totem accumulated 700.61km (438mi.) in an area roughly 135km by 95km. For complete results, photos, and information on other BC events visit: www.rallybc.com



A behind the scenes look at tires and strategy at the 2004 Pacific Forest Rally.

By Eric Grochowski and Leanne Junnila of Kamunen Racing

Give it all you've got. Right from the start of Stage one, you're going all out to start strong and prove you have what it takes. Except, now you've slid right off the surprisingly slippery mud into the ditch, losing valuable time to all those slower guys behind you. What went wrong? Should you have told your team something more intelligent than "round ones" when they asked which tires you wanted to use? Should you have waited for the longer and probably drier stages to drive at 100%? Welcome to the 2004 Pacific Forest Rally (PFR). Choose your tires wisely, use strategy to your advantage and success is yours.

This year's Pacific Forest Rally was our most challenging rally yet. We spent the day on everything from sloppy deep mud to dry hard-packed gravel. Having the right tires for each leg of the rally proved critical, especially in our two-wheel-drive Volkswagen (lovingly referred to as "one-wheel-drive", with its open differential). Our strategy was simple but effective (based on being an average-budget privateer team). This is what we learned:

1. Hope for the best, and expect the worst. It's often best to choose the tires for the worst conditions. Sacrifice a little speed for the added assurance that you'll make it to the next stage.
2. Be conservative through tricky sections. You're probably not going to win the rally on a stage with foot-deep mud and huge cliff exposures, but you could certainly lose it there, or worse.
3. It's the longer stages that decide the rally. The longer the stage, the bigger the impact on your time. Use that to your advantage. We focused our efforts on going 100% on the longer stages at PFR, and at the end of the day that's where things really worked out.

All in all, each second you spend driving down a stage road, is a second that can be made or lost. Rallying isn't about driving at 100% from start to finish, as going 100% doesn't leave any room for the unexpected. Some care with proper tire choice and some strategic pacing can make all the difference. Last year, PFR was an unlucky DNF (did not finish) for us, while this year we saw our highest placing at a National rally yet. Looking back, it now seems that luck had only a small part to do with that. Whatever the conditions, B.C. is still one of our favorite places to rally.

Putting the Power Down



Photo: Warwick Patterson

VANCOUVER MINI COOPER CLUB FALL RALLY

Well, the sun shone and more than 50 MINIs competed for top prize in the VMCC Fall Rally, September 19, organized by the WCRA.

With an amazing 32-point performance, the team of Lory Fairfield and Mike Scott-Iverson repeated their win from April's inaugural VMCC Rally, topping a field of 51 and their closest challengers, Dean Addison and Garth Miles, who finished with 96 points. Jason Finnis and Larissa Harrison rounded out the top three, finishing with 133 points.

Fairfield and Scott-Iverson picked up a set of MINI Driving Lights from MINI Yaletown, a factory alarm system courtesy of MINI Richmond, and any set of tires from the Pirelli catalogue (available through all MINI dealerships) as the top prize winners. Addison and Miles picked up a television and \$100 gift certificate from Coquitlam Centre, as well as a Pirelli jacket, bag and umbrella for second place, while Finnis and Harrison took home a K&N Typhoon Cold Air Intake, courtesy of Mopac Auto Supply, and a Mini Ipod, provided by Mac Station.

Topping the five-team media field, which also included The Beat 94.5 FM, Mini World, Driving Television and Western Driver, were Simone Blais and Lora Danyluk from Coquitlam NOW. And Dennis Hatta and David Chan, from MINI Richmond, topped the Dealership team category. The rally started and finished at Coquitlam Centre, while Mr Mike's West Coast Grill played host to the closing and awards ceremonies.

Photos and full results can be found at: www.vancouverminicooperclub.com



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