

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