

The AIRSHOW Rallye Baie de Chaleurs

135 feet... 45 meters, or half a soccer field away, was where the Mitsubishi Lancer Evolution IV of Sylvain Erickson landed after hurling over a crest in the road in front of hundreds of screaming fans. If there is one thing the Rallye Baie de Chaleurs is famous for, it's the horribly large jumps. The rally is also a favourite with drivers, not just spectators. Smooth fast roads, with high speed corners quickly separate the men from the wannabe's who have been watching too much TV.

Peter Thompson has been having his way with the championship this year with wins at Rallye Perce Neige as well as the Rocky Mountain Rally. However his winning streak would come to a halt as Antoine L'Estage took a comfortable win. L'Estage took the lead on the first stage of day one, and held position throughout the weekend to put his Hyundai Tiburon on the top podium for the first time this year. The hard charging Matt Iorio put his WRX on the second tier, as he was running for all he was worth, from the Evolution of Sylvain Erickson. At the end of the rally Iorio had just held Erickson off by 9 seconds.

Erickson hasn't competed in the national championship for the last couple of years, when he was a regular contender for the championship and scored a couple of rally wins. He would make his return in the Evolution IV that he competed with in 2003, only with a new co-driver. 17 year old Chloe Erickson, Sylvain's daughter, was charged with calling out the notes. Quite a challenge to jump into the sport at such a



Photo by Ylwick Patterson / FormulaPhotographic

high level, but Chloe was ordering dad to go faster by the final stages. Unfortunately they lost a cylinder part way through the rally costing them second place. The problem was addressed at service, but the damage on the time sheets had been done.

The Erickson/Iorio battle paled in comparison to the Olsen/Lapointe fight. Both driving Group 2 FWD cars, Gord Olsen was sitting second in class after the first leg, one minute up on Eric Lapointe. Class leader Jon Nichols rolled his car out of the rally giving the lead to Olsen. Lapointe would have something to say however, as he started to pull time out of Olsen. After 200km of stages, the VW of Olsen and Honda Civic of Lapointe had

been tied for the class win. Identical times only happen once in a blue moon in rallying, making the battle all the more exciting.

Frank Sprong however made a mockery of all but the top nine, as he drove his Team Suzuki Canada Swift+ to a ninth place overall finish, winning P1. For over a year team Suzuki has been beating cars that just should not be beaten by the production Swifts. This event saw a good team fight as Bill Bacon was with in 10 seconds of Sprong with three stages to go, but the urge to beat his 6 time champion teammate proved a little too much for him, and over shot a corner, launching his car into the bushes.

By Bud Stanley

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