

# WCRA Golddigger Rally 2005



Round 4 of the BC Regional TSD Rally Championship, the Golddigger Rally 2005 took place on the overnight of July 23-24. Thirteen teams made it to the new start location in Lytton on the Fraser Canyon where the weather cooperated for a pleasant if breezy outdoor registration and technical inspection.

Odometers were checked on the highway drive to Spences Bridge where the competitors turned into the hills to run on completely new Regularity stages that criss-crossed back and forth over the region of the Hat Creek plateau. A fuel stop in Cache Creek was made before the second leg return on more new roads to rally end in Boston Bar.

The main reason for moving the rally from its traditional Pemberton base was the continuing erosion of the Hurley Pass road and that region's penchant for eating tires. The Fraser-Thompson area promised to be easier on cars while offering to get away from the repetitive stages around Gold Bridge. Unfortunately, scattered rockfalls along the new route provided nasty surprises for everyone and not repeating stages meant you didn't know what to expect. A night rally with very little traffic, the speeds were intended to be interesting. With the addition of rocks the event became extremely challenging and attrition played a significant role in the outcome.

## Rallying at O'dark:30

Photo by Warwick Patterson/FormulaPhotographic



Organizers and competitors both relearned some basic rally concepts as the night progressed. Proper car preparation for any rally is a must and the first stage saw retirements when rocks damaged cars with vulnerable underbody bits. The Geelen/Adie Festiva wore out its transmission and tired steering while the Saab 96 of Westwick/Mathews relocated a low hanging exhaust to the area directly beneath the rear tires. Daly/Ustare were dealt a cruel blow mid stage when a simple flat tire turned nasty upon discovering that the key for the locknuts had not been replaced in the car at the last dealer service. With no way to remove the wheel a tow truck was summoned by sat-phone.

The third stage also claimed victims. The Maydaniuks in the Sti were forced to withdraw after puncturing and with only a space saver as spare. The Adrenalin Rally team of Tewnton/Carriere lived up to its name when they failed to follow the Golden Rules of Rallying...*stay on the road, stay on the route, stay on time*. Championship events are tricky to drive at best and I know only two(sic) well how haste makes waste when trying to make up time. Fortunately there was no need to test the rally's safety plan as both crew members were OK.

After the mid-route rest stop the remaining teams seemed to find the rhythm of the event (drive well and watch for rocks!) and the lack of further drama gave the rally workers a chance to scramble back into order.

At the end of the road of the US team of Gary Webb & John Kisela who beat Ren Carrol and stand-in driver John Erickson to the podium for first. Third place went to the Historic Volvo of Gil Stuart & Kevin Marcan who just edged rivals Richard Childs & Helen Welter. First Novices were Stephen Ban & Chris Peake with the only surviving Calculator competitors Martin Chung & Christa Monasch picking up their class win for a finish.

As event operator I take away much to think about. The roads hold promise for return visits if the rockfall hazard can be minimized. The communications net of HAM radios worked well in places and not at all in others so better utilization of resources is needed. The safety plan adopted this year for TSDs would have worked nicely if needed. The people of Boston Bar and Lytton were very helpful to me and this more than anything else will persuade me where to run next year's route. For the small communities throughout BC that our 6 rallies contact, a parade of 30-40 customers in the space on an hour can be a blessing or a curse. I fully intend to support those businesses that have made an effort on our behalf. I don't know how they manage to survive and if they fail their towns will too. Eventually the wonderful roads that link them will become abandoned and we will lose our playground.

By John McLaren