

YOKOHAMA PACIFIC FOREST RALLY

MERRITT, BC

Round 5 of the Canadian Rally Championship

Pacific Forest Rally is the flagship event for the WCRA and not surprisingly every effort is made to maximize success. Hundreds of hours are spent each year building and promoting the rally so that it grows in form from one running to the next. The dedication and attention to detail has become infectious and not only has the core group grown in size but outsiders are taking an interest and bringing new possibilities with them. The host town of Merritt BC is fully supportive; this year closing off streets and a shopping mall on Friday night so the rally could run before spectators on a short in-town tarmac stage. In consideration of the AWD cars, the fire department was on hand to wet the pavement, or maybe they just wanted to see more sliding car action for themselves. ATV Productions was on scene to record the excitement and will broadcast the PFR rally across Canada, the only event in the Canadian Rally Championship to be seen on TV this year. Competitors of ALL levels were



Photo by Dave Harvey

invited to carry in-car cameras and submit footage for the program. The recently created Flat Over Crest website sent reporters and cameras who interviewed and photographed participants for live updates and stories that were posted straight to the net. Competitors

found themselves actually checking the site to see how the rally was going for others.

Some very challenging roads make up the route the competitors must follow. Fast and smooth with many places that can catch-out even the most experienced rally drivers. Word is getting around that this is a great rally to drive. The fact that it is the penultimate round in both the Canadian Rally (national) and Western Canada Regional Championships doesn't hurt attendance either. Teams come to Merritt seeking a fun event that is key to overall standings. Peter Thomson came to defend his lead in the CRC series. His closest rival, Antoine L'Estage came to close the gap. American drivers Matt Iorio and John Cassidy both damaged their vehicles in earlier events but were able to secure rental rallycars so that they could keep the hunt alive. Pat Richard is not contesting the Canadian Championship this year but he came for a fun run on his local event. Scott Trinder has already locked up the Regional title so he was out for good times also but



Photo by Louren Sansregret