

'04 Triple-Crown Champion.

An interview with Pat Richard

By Warwick Patterson

"This interview originally appeared in Issue #2 of Subsport Magazine, and is reprinted here with permission of the author and publication."

So, take us on a brief overview of your rally career so far. It's been a pretty quick five years.

Well, five years is pretty long sometimes too. We started rallying when I lived up in Whistler about five years ago, and we did our first event in Alberta because at the time there were no events in BC. After our first couple of rallies we started to do well. I think in our second rally we came fourth overall at a National. From then on we got hooked up with Subaru and I won the Canadian Championship in 2002 and the North American Championship that year as well. In 2003 we did the Production Car World Championship, and in 2004 we've won the Canadian and American Championships.

You kind of jumped in the deep end when you started rallying and progressed very rapidly. If you were to give advice to new rallyists, how would you suggest they start out?

When I jumped into rallying, I guess I'd always wanted to rally ever since I was

about sixteen and I'd seen it on TV. We had always sort of "rallied" on the backroads and stuff and when I was finally able to do it, I knew it was something I really wanted to do all my life. Everyone's different and has their own way of doing things. Some people like to jump in whole hog and others like to take smaller steps. Generally speaking, I think for most people, until they know that rallying is what it needs to be for them, they should probably try and go in smaller steps. Some people think we went in crazy, but we took smaller steps. Like, we didn't build a crazy car to start with. I spent the minimum on the car and did the most number of events. I think that's better, just to get more experience.

Rallying is tough. You have to stay up all night for weeks on end, and spend money and time, and drive really far. It's like anything, the benefits need to be worth the reward, but if you invest too much of your money and you don't enjoy it, then you'll probably get burnt out. You see a lot of people coming in with these crazy cars and they only do three or four rallies before they disappear forever.

Some people might say that this year has been pretty easy for you. What's this year been like from your perspective?

I think that's not really true. I think that every rally I've had to try pretty hard and we've actually led every rally we've entered this year, but it wasn't like we were just cruising around. All the rallies have had really fast drivers.

In Canada, I've had to beat guys like Frank Sprongl, Sylvain Erickson, Tom McGeer, and Antoine L'estage. Those are all guys whom, rightfully so, think that they can win at the start of every rally. So, they've all been pretty good battles. In the US, we've had to go up against all the top



Photo by Warwick Patterson

drivers that were driving last year and the year before like Ramana Lagemann, Seamus Burke, Lauchlin O'Sullivan. They're all still driving, so it's not like just because the factory teams weren't there the driver's were gone. I've just had to put my head down and do the job because last year was a really tough year.

What was it like running your own program this year in the States?

It was pretty good actually. The sponsorship for the World Championship fell through right at the last minute, so I only had about a week to get a program together if I was going to try and do the US series from the start. So, I just got the car and showed up at the first race not having too many high expectations but just wanting to run it. We ended up winning that race and the next two in the US after that so the year started off well and we've been kind of riding on the coattails of that early success. Running my own car in the US has been not too much different from



Photo by Warwick Patterson