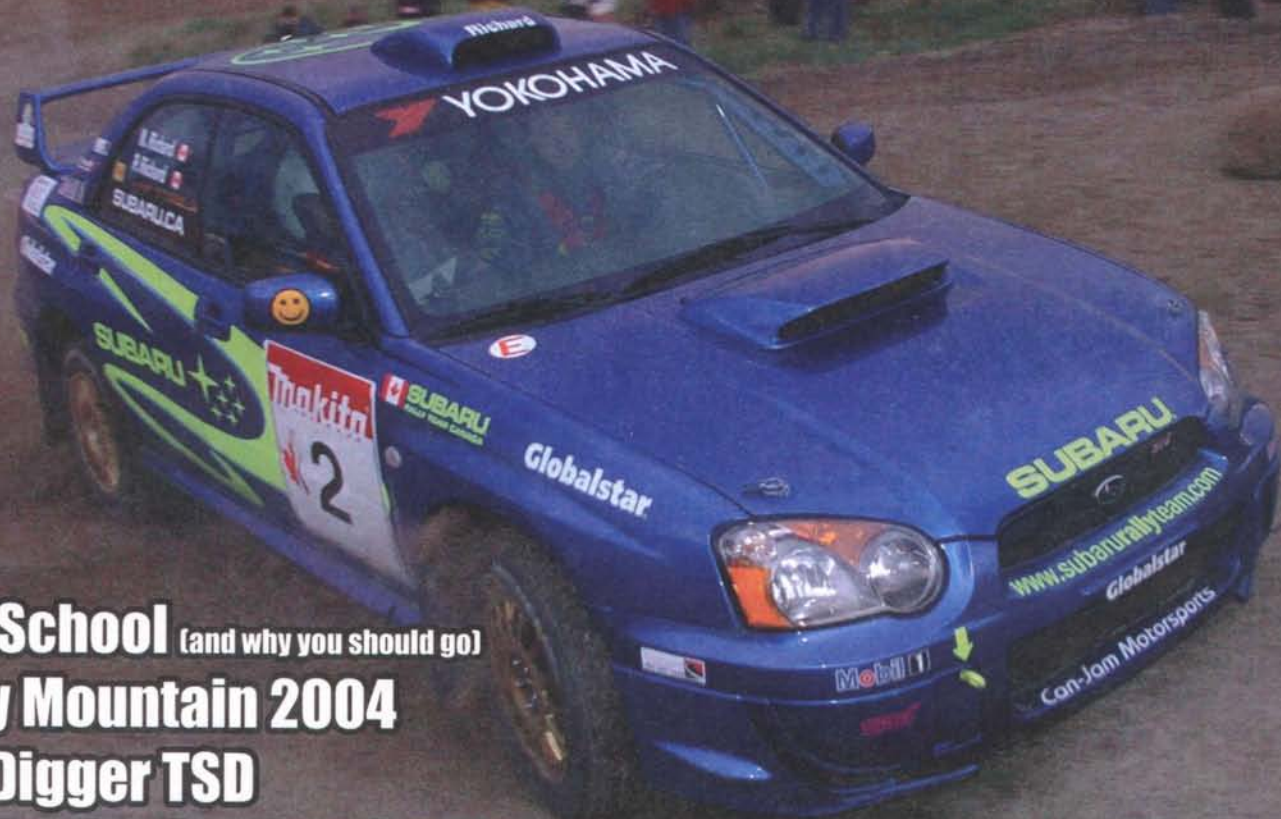


Airtime

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AUGUST 2004

BRITISH COLUMBIA'S RALLY UPDATE



Rally School (and why you should go)
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TSD Tips for Staying On Time

TSD TIPS for staying on time

By Peter Parsonage

After just one, ½ day WCRA novice TSD event, my son Owen and I did Totem 2001 as a practice for T-Bird 2002. We started out on the novice course with a completely standard car, transitioned to an accessory odometer after about 3-4 rallies, and won the BC Regional Championship Novice class.

This article is a reflection on techniques to make the most of different levels of novice equipment. I am not going to describe how to get into the sport or recommend equipment to buy. I'm only covering ways to keep you on time.

The bare minimum you need to escape a weekend from hell is a trip odometer accurate to 100m, a watch with a second hand, and a pen/pencil. All equipment should be in good working order and stand some chance of still working at the end of the event.

There is one more piece of equipment that is free and works great. Go to the www.rallybc.com web site and print yourself at least one copy of the navigator's cheat sheet. This is invaluable if you don't have a calculator (or even if you do).

Let's assume you have a calculator, so we can forego the Math 101 lessons. When the rally master gives you the route book, you start to crunch the numbers. If you are quick at doing calculations, you will want to do all the references in the route book. Yes every instruction! I know it's a lot but the more you do, the better your result will be.

If the route master has given you a route book with both km and mileage distances - cross out the ones you will not be using. Driving with an odometer calibrated in km, to route instructions given in miles, will not lead to a victorious end to the day.

When you start calculating, just work out times for the speed change instructions. At the end of each regularity, your arrival time should match your start time for the transit that follows (to the second). Usually, there are only between 5 and 20 speed change instructions. Getting those done first is like being on Millionaire and getting to the \$32K mark. It's money in the bank. If you are making a mistake in the way you calculate (or the route master has made a mistake in the book) this is the quickest way to find it and a lot less to have to do over.

Depending on how well you are getting through the route calculations, do all the speed changes for all regularities or do enough to take you to a break in the schedule and then go back to fill in the blanks.

The key thing is to have a target time for every instruction before you start each regularity. Most instructions are just a short distance apart. As long as you are reasonable at maintaining an average speed, you will not wonder far off and can easily adjust as each instruction point comes up.

Without an accessory odometer, the chances of your odo matching the route book will be slim. After you have done the odo check, you will need to convert all the hard points into a corrected distance. Make sure you write clearly, so that you cannot get confused between your corrected value and the route book value.

Do not do the odo check, change the distances, and then work out your times. That's just never going to work.

When you are traveling in the regularity, the navigator needs to count the driver down to each hard point. The driver can see something like a cattle guard in the distance and that would be a hard point in the book. You have the exact time that you should be there. Give the driver fair warning (say 20-30 seconds in advance). It's no good saying cattle guard... now! Better to use cattle guard in 15 and then count down from 10. As you get to 4,3,2 etc. the driver will adjust the speed. You say 3,2,1,Now! and the car hits the cattle guard bang on time.

What if you are late? If you are within a few seconds of perfect time, the navigator should keep a keen eye on the watch and keep counting until you do hit the hard point. Why? So that you both know exactly how far behind you are. If it's something like 3 seconds your driver should eventually get a feel for how much faster to go, and for how long to recover 3 seconds.

Navigator tip: If you are late getting to the hard point, do not keep counting until well after you have passed it. This is sure to create some unnecessary tension between you and the driver. It always did when I was late.

Without an accessory odometer, your driver must also monitor the trip meter very carefully. Has it just tripped or is it just about to trip? That will halve your inaccuracy due to the odo. Now you are working to 50m instead of 100m accuracy. At 60kph, that's 2 second accuracy instead of 4.

Driver tip: At each average speed, get familiar with counting between each 100m on the trip. It's usually somewhere around 5 seconds. Now when the navigator calls 13.67 in 5,4,3,2,1 you should see it trip to 13.6 when they say 3 and it should trip to 13.7 about 2 seconds after they say now.

What do you do if there are no instructions for 5km? This is where the cheat sheet comes in. If you just left a hard point, use the cheat sheet to tell you how long (in seconds) to travel 500m. It does not matter where the hard point was (say 13.29). It's easy to make that 13.79, 14.29, 14.79 etc. and all you have to do is count down every 30 seconds or so. This will keep you on time as it creates artificial hard points every 500m and you can keep to within the 2-3 second accuracy.

Getting below the 2 seconds accuracy mark really requires an accessory odometer that gives you distance to 10m (or better). For TSD rallying, the odo should be able to be calibrated to match whatever the route book needs. Ideally, it should have nudge, pause, halt and reverse. I'll not go into why it needs all those functions. Trust me, you'll find a use for every one of them if you do enough rallies.

Now that you have a great odo, your calculations will change slightly. You still work out all the speed changes, but now you do not need to calculate every hard point. You can just do the 500m intervals. Try it using the cheat sheet. It's very easy to run off the times every 500m for a 12km section. You still need the hard points, but you use them (when you get there) to nudge the odo back to perfect distance. Now it's just you, the odo and the watch. Much simpler.

Max Etak on the Mountain Trials Stages

June 19th was the date for this year's Mountain Trials Performance Rally, round five of the Western Canada Rally Championship, and anyone who has been to this event in the past will know that I am usually to be found Marshalling in the Service Area, scheming to get out to the stages where the action is. Truth be told Service is actually a pretty sweet gig as you get to see all the teams when they come in and hear all their stories first hand, there is food and toilets nearby and normally there aren't too many mosquitoes or bears.

Ever since I was 6 years old I have wanted to drive a rally car. Recently, I got my chance. This past winter my wife and I bought a little ready-to-rally car, absolutely complete, just add crew. Finding a driver was easy: me. Locating someone to sit in the co-driver's seat took rather longer. In fact it looked quite likely that no-one would step forward. Fortunately there is the "rally community" of which everyone speaks so highly. Rally friends in England loaned us a Nomex suit and they posted it across. We were able to borrow a helmet from one of the event organizers. Several people in the club provided contacts for likely co-drivers and in the end we secured a body to put inside the racing gear and strap into the car. WCRA club members helped out by expediting the paperwork necessary to compete and still more people helped with car preparation and technical advice. We were ready to rally!

On race day, organizers helped us negotiate technical inspection and we were given a lesson on how to prepare our "stage notes", such as they were. With complete first-timers and the car itself the smallest competitive machinery by a long shot we were started last of 19 competitors. At each of the control points friendly people cheered us on and inquired of the little car. Whenever we stopped, fellow competitors or event staff would wander over and chat. We concentrated on finishing each stage one at a time. Then we tried to finish each stage a little quicker than our first run. After a heart-stopping spin on the Princeton Cutoff section we went back to concentrating on stage finishes. We had driven the car to the rally, and I needed to be able to drive it home.

On the very last part of the very last stage, a nice team from Alberta went wide on a corner and got stuck in the weeds. By the time they had limped to the end of the stage we had moved ahead of them in the standings to 13th of the 14 finishing teams. All in all we had an excellent time; we finished our first event, we won our class in spite of fierce competition from ourselves, we weren't dead last. Looking at the times, we even beat a few people here and there on stage times.

If you want to try rallying, go for it! It can be done cheaply and there are lots of people who will help you out. Everyone I've spoken to enjoys answering questions. A word of caution though...rallying can be addictive.

By Max Etak (John McLaren)



Peter Goes to Rally School (and why you should too)

By Peter Parsonage



Most car enthusiasts invest considerable time and money in making their vehicle faster and ignore one of the most effective ways to gain performance under every driving condition; improving the nut behind the wheel.

\$1000 would buy you a good cat-back exhaust and may add 10-15 bhp. In the summer of 1999, I spent \$600 on a fully day at Rally School Ireland (www.rallyschoolireland.ie). I came away with a lot of memories and a performance improvement in excess of 10-15 bhp. The best thing about this mod is that it is instantly transferable to every car I drive and does not affect my warranty.

Depending on your previous experience and skill level, there are several things to bear in mind when choosing a rally school.

Types of vehicles will be a big influence and you should look carefully at what will give you the best return on investment. It's nice to think that you can get into Peter's WRC car and get the best experience. Certainly, it will be scary fast but let's face it, you will not be experiencing the maximum out of the car and you could easily scare yourself in a car a lot less trick.

Driving a rally car fast is tiring and you will probably only have the stamina to drive between 50-60% of the time. Being in a small group is not necessarily a bad thing, as the car does not need as much rest as you. If you just want the experience of driving a rally car, being in a group is cheaper and you get to share your excitement with people just as giddy as you. If you are serious about improving skills, a full one on one day will allow you to concentrate, and the instructor can introduce the skills at a pace that suits you.

I have experienced very powerful cars before (Formula 3, McLaren F1, F40 LMs, Jaguar XJ220 etc.) and driven on gravel on more than one occasion. I had never driven a top class rally car. What I wanted, was to experience a fully prepared Prodrive Group N Subaru rally car and practice the Scandinavian flick. Until then, I had been cruising fast on gravel rather than committing as you see on TV. I chose a mid week rather than a weekend and agreed to be in a group. Fortunately, while weekends are busy, no one else fancied doing this during the week, so it became 1 on 1.

I arrived with Owen in tow early morning and was greeted by typically friendly staff. The day starts with an introduction to the owner/instructor (David), briefings on safety, the vehicles and techniques. Not too much talk though, just enough to set the ideas out in my head before trying to put it into practice.

Rally School Ireland has a purpose built facility that contains every type of corner and situation you will encounter. There's a mixture of surfaces, surface changes, and corner types. The hairpin is real fun and it's no accident that it's right in front of the conference centre so that you get to demonstrate your abilities in front of your peers.

Although I was booked on the Subaru, we started out in a fully prepared RWD Escort so that David could assess my skills and I could start to practice the flick in a real rally car. David drove first and demonstrated the track and the different techniques to each type of corner. After just 3 laps, it was my turn. Colin McRae is lucky that I chose to work in the software industry because I knew just how to make the car go sideways. So sideways, it was hardly ever pointing the right way. That's good, right?

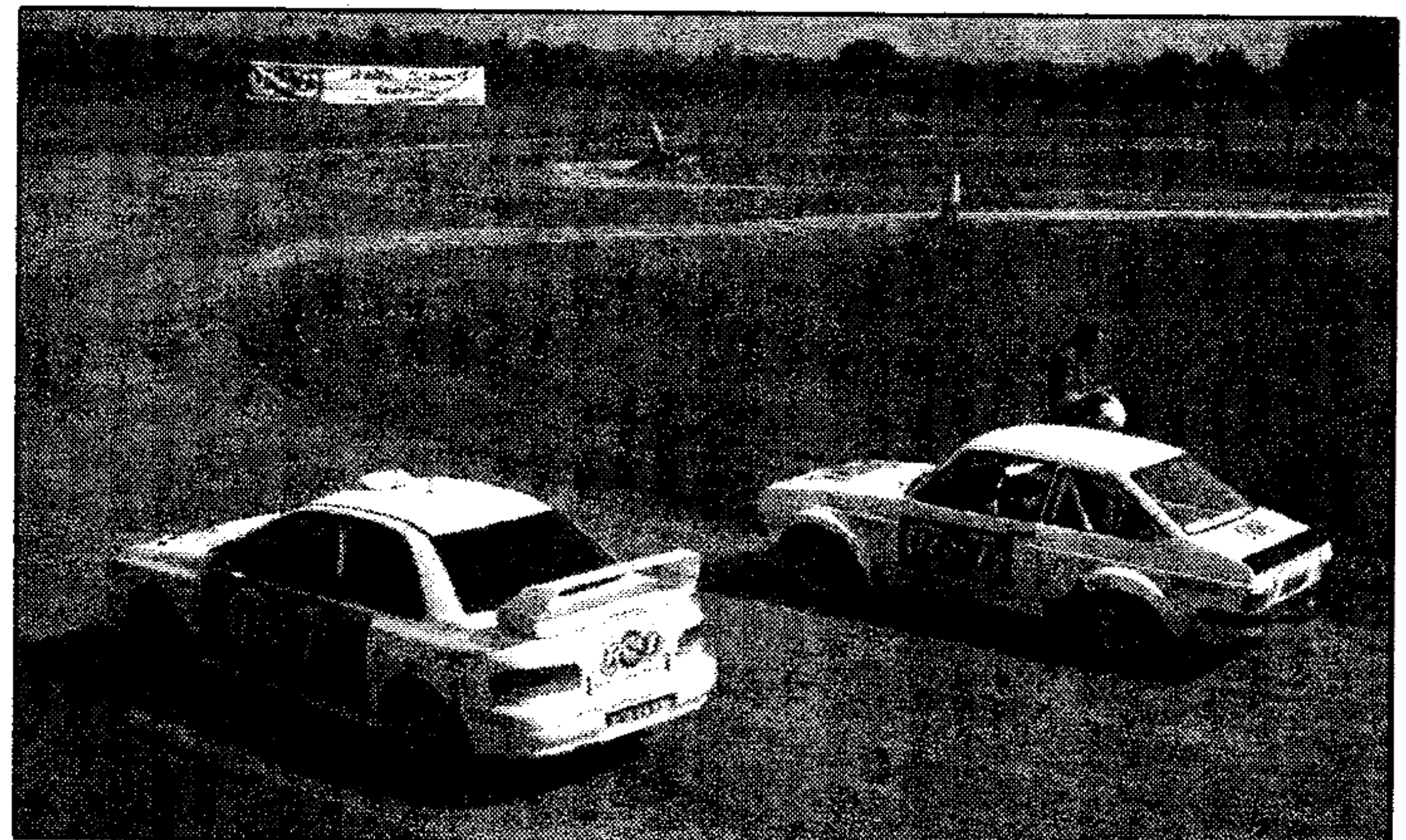
The Escort is it. The ultimate rally driving experience just as it should be. This was so much fun. We only stopped lapping when I got too tired and needed a break. After about 2 hours in the Escort, I was getting it; brake, flick, gas, gas, gas, repeat. Despite my enthusiasm to beat all land speed records, David never once asked me to slow down. One trick I did pick up through the day was to realize that if he started laughing, I was going way too fast. I learnt to check the laugh-meter going into every corner as a way of preparing for the inevitable. The barrels on the course are empty (thankfully) and the run offs wide. Planting trees to the side would be a waste of time. They would not last long.

After the Escort, we moved over to the Subaru. I was ready. I knew the corners. I was so ready for this. Again, David does the first few laps to set the scene. Only problem is, you don't drive the Subaru fast like you drive the Escort. Now I have to start all over and forget all the wild power slides going into the corners. Yes you flick, but you have so much grip under braking and acceleration it's much faster to be clean and tidy rather than wild.

The first thing you notice about the Subaru is the acceleration. This is outrageously fast. We used Pirelli P6000 tires on the mixed surfaces so that the car would slide even at the relatively tame speeds I was capable of. A good choice by the rally school because it really helped with the whole experience.

Just for fun, we tried with the centre diff off and the car could not even accelerate in a straight line without a fight. It was a great demonstration of just how effective all the bits are on a modern rally car. This is a car built for hooligans. I would never get tired of this car. I think I gave up trying not to giggle while driving. After all, David spent all day laughing it only seemed right that I joined in.

Since I was there, they have added some of the classic rally cars. Audi Quattro, Metro 6R4. For those of you old like me. You have got to go there and treat yourself. Road trip anyone?



Stage Rally Scoring: Explained

By Peter Parsonage - Photo: Warwick

When you see co-drivers in the World Rally Championship losing a rally because they checked in to a control at the wrong time, you probably thought that was a pretty dumb move. If people with their experience cannot add a few numbers together, just what hope is there for the amateur?

Timing and scoring on a stage rally is actually much more complex than you would first expect. You start the day with a published schedule and, just maybe, that schedule will remain intact. Most rallies, unfortunately, are subject to time pressures that adjust that schedule. Sometimes it is down to the organizers, sometimes the competitors. Every competitor has an independent schedule that starts in sync with everyone else and breaks away the moment you leave the start ramp.

Let's look at what's involved in a Canadian rally by working with an example for car #5 on a typical rally. The rally master has a nice schedule of transits, stages and service that begins at 09:00 am and finishes sometime in the evening. One week before the event, there you are on the entry list as car #5 in slot #5. You could safely assume that with a 1-minute gap between cars, your day is going to start for real at 09:05am.

After recce the day before the rally, nothing has changed so your co-driver starts to plan stage and service times.

During the night before the rally, a few late entries have arrived and they are fast drivers with a better seed index than you, so you get bumped. Now you're following car #22 and starting in 9th position while still carrying car #5. You have not started yet and you're already adjusting your times.

No major biggie so far, you're now starting at 09:09 and duly set off on time. The route book says 10 minute transit to the start of stage one and you get there in plenty of time. Your co-driver adds the transit time to your start time and comes up with 09:19 as the time you should enter the control zone. In you go, on time, and everything's fine so far except that the stage is not ready and there will be a delay. Your schedule is now nothing more than a bunch of incremental times that you must take one at a time as it happens. You can no longer look at the schedule and expect to be at service anything like the time published.

At 09:57 the marshals give you a start time of 09:59 and you take to the stage on time. An incident free run sees you through the stage (winning of course) in 7m24s. The route book allows you 12 minutes for the stage and follows that with another 10 minute transit. So, what time are you to check into the next stage start time control?

09:59 + 7 + 10 = 10:16 (wrong)
09:59 + 12 + 10 = 10:21 (correct)

If you're within the slow time, you use the slow time for the stage and not your stage time. Anyone remember an EVO 7 throwing away a win at Mountain Trials in 2003 because the navigator made just this mistake?



What if your run had not been trouble free? You had a puncture and limped out of the stage at 10:14:21. What time are you due to check into the next time control?

09:59 + 12 + 10 = 10:21 (wrong)
09:59 + 14 + 10 = 10:23 (wrong)
09:59 + 15 + 10 = 10:24 (correct)

There are no penalties directly involved with not completing the stage on time (after all you just gave yourself a big enough handicap) but even if you do get to the start of stage two you must not take your 10:21 slot. If it was only you being slow, all the other competitors are now wondering why there's no one checking in at 10:21 and it's more than likely that the crew that should be in at 10:22 will panic and jump in 1 minute early. Of course when you want to check in there's another car also due to check in at the same time so things are heating up. The marshals will decide what order the two of you will start the stage and get everyone back onto a 1 minute gap.

Things don't seem to be going too well for you and you're worried about that puncture. You get flustered and check into service one minute too early. Now you eventually figure out you have done that. Should you now check out on your previously scheduled time, the time published in the route book, or a time based on the time you went into service?

If you were given 30 minutes for service, you better check out 30 minutes after you went in, or you're going to get more time presents. Lucky for you the Rally Master takes pity and does a reseed, which means you can forget all the calculations and just check out at the time he gives you (so none of the previous alternatives).

Eventually, you survive the day and reach the rally finish. How well did you do? Well your score will be published as an accumulated time. It's the amount of time you spent speeding through the stages (difference between stage finish and stage start times) + and time penalties for checking in or out of a control at the wrong time (1 minute for each minute early, 10 seconds for each minute late) + assigned penalties (jump starting the stage, short cuts, touching chicanes, being rude to the scorer etc.).

Despite your puncture on stage 1, and the hiccup at the first service, you drove so fast you won the day anyway. Well done.

'Twas a dark and dusty night. More or less.

Golddigger TSD Rally 2004

by John McLaren



This year's Golddigger TSD Rally was set in the hills to the North of Pemberton BC and ran through the night of July 24-25th with competitors covering about 250km of gravel roads. Registration and Tech Inspection took place in the square in Pemberton and drew several onlookers, locals intrigued by the idea of a rally on their home roads. The local police dropped by at the sight of several obviously competitive automobiles but when WCRA representatives explained our sport they went away happy, re-assured that we would run a responsible event. A driver's briefing was held where safety was emphasized as the roads in use are a long way from outside assistance and then the Route Books were handed out and the competitors were off. Except for the team of Darrell Pannich and Michelle Toffler who had missed the early ferry from Vancouver Island and had yet to arrive. Fortunately they made it in time to get individually Tech'd and briefed and a Route Book was thrown at them. They left for the first stage two minutes late and were later observed inquiring about the correct "rally time".

The first stage saw the first casualties of attrition. In both cases the vehicles belonged to event volunteers with one a case of broken rear suspension and the other being an overstressed alternator. Both cars were able to get under way again and through the use of HAM communications the organizers were able to adapt Checkpoint locations without disrupting the rally. In fact, there were several conversations taking place on the radio waves. Rallymaster was trying to reposition Checkpoint crews, Sweep was trying to locate a missing competitor, and someone came on to point out the fantastic Northern Lights show going on above. As far as I am aware, none of the perfect zero scores were a product of Checkpoints looking skywards, my claim and I'm sticking to it.

In the middle of the night, several stories were unfolding. The Honda Civic of Aaron Neumann, with repaired suspension courtesy of nylon tie-downs, had rejoined the rally route in time to come across Zian Alladina's Eagle Talon, very late, more than a little lost, and using up fuel. Things were sorted out, direction was changed and both vehicles made it safely to the rally end. John Kisella, all the way from Seattle, had volunteered as a Checkpoint and his powerful HAM radio was reaching out to Ken Kwong in the Sweep truck to let him know that Checkpointers Dan McLean and Adrienne Lang had gone off in a big way but were unhurt. Ken was able to recover the crew but do nothing for the car which lay on it's side well below the road, victim of corrugations on a quick downhill section.

Competition was tight in all categories with Ren and RJ Carroll making a rare mistake on the last stage leaving Brian and Dennis Wende unchallenged in the Unlimited and Overall lead. At the same time latecomers Darrell and Michelle were giving fellow island rallyists Martin Chung and Christa Monasch pressure in the Calculator class but it was Martin and Christa that held on for first in class as well as a great 2nd overall. The largest class was the Novices and the first time pairing of Doug Tewnion and Brian Carriere won that as well as taking an excellent third overall!! The next TSD rally action will be on Vancouver Island, keep an eye on rallybc for details.

2004 Gold Digger Final Results

Car #	Driver	Navigator	Vehicle	Class	Points
2	Brian Wende	Dennis Wende	Subaru Legacy Turbo	Unlimited	4
3	Martin Chung	Christa Monasch	Subaru Impreza	Calculator	47
6	Doug Tewnion	Brian Carriere	VW Golf	Novice	72
9	Nate Campbell	Andrew Hewitson	VW Golf	Novice	113
4	Darrell Pannich	Michelle Toffler	Plymouth Laser	Calculator	120
1	R.J. Carroll	Ren Carroll	Subaru WRX	Unlimited	136
8	Mark Pinder	Keith Goddard	Toyota Echo	Novice	144
5	Shawn Edstrom	Geoff Gauthier	Subaru Legacy	Novice	197
7	Zian Alladina	Jon Erickson	Eagle Talon	Novice	DNF

Rocky Mountain Rally 2004

With less than a week to go, the 2004 Rocky Mountain rally was facing a full entry list, and snow on the stages. Many things can change over a week, and by the start of the rally the entry was down to 44 cars, still a new record entry, and the roads were now dry and dusty.

Competitors arrived in Calgary from across Canada and the United States to contest the second round of the Canadian Rally Championship. Notably, the Subaru Rally Team Canada had Pat Richard on a charge looking for his fifth consecutive victory in North America this year and Tom McGeer debuting his new open class STi. Suzuki was also entering the fray with a two-car entry. The P2 Swifts were fresh off their builds and were set for their first event in the lonely production class.

The forest stages were set to run on Saturday in the familiar Porcupine Hills, about 2 hours south of Calgary. Friday night features two spectator stages at the Blackfoot Motorcycle park in the city. Typically this stage is about a kilometer and features a couple of hops and one significant jump. The layout this year looked much more sedate, with no big air expected.

Defending Canadian Group 2 champion Gord Olsen was the first to find out that the ploughed track has a hidden surprise when he rolled his Golf GTi in the last set of corners on the stage. He was rolled back on his wheels by marshals and spectators and continued. Joel Levac joined Olsen on his roof, repeating the same mistake on the same corner, turtling his Open class WRX. The now experienced fans righted the car quickly and Levac only lost 12 seconds on his back, compared to over a minute lost by Olsen.

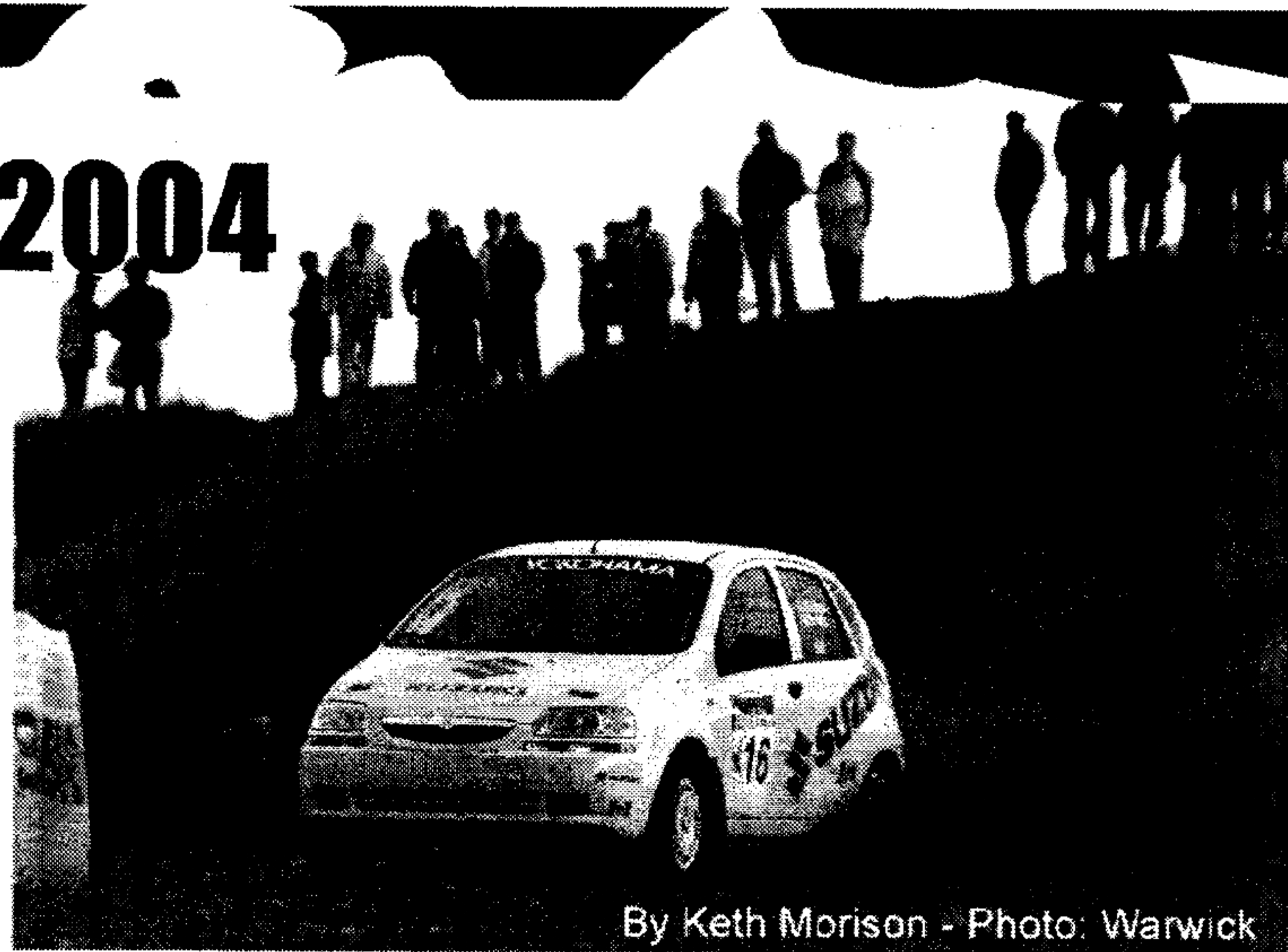
Saturday morning started with a just under 14km long stage that started with a twisty and technical section, past the spectator area and into an fast, open and flowing section. The cars would top out their cars in the fast bits, and the Jemba stage notes provided by the organizers would allow the teams to go quicker than a traditional 'blind' rally.

The Subaru Rally Team Canada crew of Tom McGeer and Howard Davies were the first car on the stage. At about 10 km into the stage, well into the fast section, McGeer's freshly built open class STi left the road on a medium left hand corner after a crest. The car suffered extreme damage, but Davies and McGeer emerged without injuries.

Subaru's other crew of co-driver Nathalie Richard and her brother Pat made the most of the stage, winning it with a 19 second gap to the second fastest car, Antoine L'Estage's open class Tiburon, and a 14 second gap to Andrew Comrie-Picard's open class EVO IV.

The sole Group N entry of Peter Thomson and Rod Hendrickson finished the stage off in 4th place overall, followed by BC's Joe Battrick and Owen Parsonage in their P4 leading WRX.

The positions would stay very much the same through the day, with Comrie-Picard and L'Estage trading positions through the rally.



By Keth Morison - Photo: Warwick

In the late stages of the rally, transmission problems in Lestage's Hyundai allowed Comrie-Picard to take second place and hang on to the spot to the end of the rally.

After the second service of the day, the warm weather and dry conditions took a brief holiday. Hail and rain greeted the cars as they arrived at the start for stage 11. The precipitation was localized, and much of the rally route remained dry. However, the Beaver Road section of the rally, used in stages 5, 13 and 14, is known for being slippery when wet, and wet it was. This portion of the rally was limited to cars competing in the national event, but a short downhill section proved a huge challenge to the teams. Everyone made it through the section, and back out, but it was a rough ride for some.

At the end of Stage 14, Richard handily won the event in 1:28:34 with an almost 3 minute gap back to Andrew Comrie Picard in second (1:31:33) and Antoine L'Estage in third (1:32:20). The top 3 cars were all open class cars, so the class podium is the same. The P4 class was won by Joe Battrick (1:39:38) with redrick LaBrie in second (1:43:02) and reigning Western Canadian Champion Janusz Komorowski 3rd in class (1:45:33).

The normal Group 2 battle between Gord Olsen and Jon Nichols ended on stage 7 when a mechanical failure took Nichols out of the rally. At the end of the event, Olsen found himself second in Group 2 (1:44:37) to American competitor Todd Hartmann (1:43:37) by exactly the minute he lost rolling in the spectator stages. Third in Group 2 went to the husband and wife team of Tom and Amy Machnik out of Edmonton (1:48:18).

Vittorio Barres and Sandy Hygate brought home the top honours in the P3 class in their SCCA prepped Focus SVT, finishing the event in 1:48:18, tying Machnik for 13th overall. Scott Comens took second in P3 (1:49:38) and former Canadian PGT champion Jorge Dascollas rounded out the class in third (1:55:46).

William Bacon brought the first of the two Swifts to first (of two) in the P2 fight (1:49:49) and team mate Thierry Menegoz brought home the points for second in 2:09:05. The lone p1 entry of Ashton Evans in a 1989 Swift GTi finished the rally in 2:42:24.

The Rocky Mountain Rally also hosts a regional championship event that is based on the first 10 stages of the rally. 29 cars entered the regional event, 13 of which were regional only entrants. National P4 winner Battrick ran away with the regional win, finishing the 10 stages in 1:03:53. Norm Leblanc was second quickest through the stages at 1:05:56, but two minutes of road penalties pushed him back to fifth overall. Todd Hartman brought his Gr2 golf home in second place, and Gord Olsen finished third overall in the regional.

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