



mid season
RALLY
 recap

The New Zealand Rally Championship held two rounds recently at opposite ends of the country. In Dunedin the Rally of Otago consisted of three parts, the main championship contenders, an all comers section and the Classic Rally, a real crowd favourite.

In the Bay of Plenty, the second major international rally was held around Rotorua, as the FIA Asia Pacific Rally Championship was contested. Along with the international aspect, Rally Rotorua hosted the usual crop of NZRC contenders and an all comers section.

International Rally of Otago

Concluding the second round of the Parker ENZED New Zealand Rally Championship, day two of the Otago Rally maintained the Subaru front running theme.

Starting with a clean slate for the second leg of the Otago Daily Times Rally of Otago, 23 cars tackled the remaining seven stages, with Subaru's Chris West returning home as the event winner.

Dawn for the second leg of the rally revealed brilliant clear skies. Heading south of Dunedin for the opening group of stages, a heavy overnight frost through the region left ice patches - adding variety to the conditions in what was otherwise clear, yet still wet, forest roads. Switching to mud tyres was the difference between the

leading cars, though the compound of tyre largely affected the grip competitors could work with.

Included in the day's starters was the rejoining of Reg Cook and James Hancock to the field. While first car on the road of Chris West found the opening two stages a little trickier, heavy ice patches made the forest sections even more slippery. However it was Masterton's Richard Mason who showed his late return to the season was no hindrance in setting fastest times in the first four stages.

"They are roads that I like and I'm not feeling as rusty," said Mason, although he pointed out the ice breaking done by the leading cars wasn't creating an advantage. "Definitely, it isn't any easier after having a few cars clear the road ahead of me, we've had a few moments with it being so slippery."

For Chris West, the plan heading in to the penultimate stage of the rally was to keep the same pace and not risk the overall round victory. After finishing the mammoth 42.22km stage, West came out with the stage win, even though the gearstick broke just after the halfway mark. "We reckoned we were about 16 seconds ahead of the rest of the field at that point," said West.

At the final super stage held near the Dunedin city centre, it was Mason who held his lead for the day, pipping West by a narrow 3.6 seconds. However, the Subaru battle went West's way, with

the total aggregate time for the two days putting West ahead by 26.3 seconds.

Early Mitsubishi leader was local Emma Gilmour, who kept the pressure on to sit behind the Subaru pair for the majority of the leg. "I did 150km in wet slippery slushy weather conditions last weekend, so that has to be a good thing when you get to an event a week later, you feel right in the groove."

Gilmour, with the help of tyre supplier Dunlop, made a choice that kept the 25-year old in touch with the leaders. "We were lucky, Dunlop helped us out with 195 size tyres this morning which helped."

However the increasing pace of fellow Mitsubishi drivers changed the order, Auckland's Mark Tapper (Lancer EVO 7) was one to benefit from a very quick time in the penultimate 42.2km stage - finishing the leg in third position. His combined championship point accumulation maintains his overall lead, albeit cut to a one point advantage.

"I'm very happy to still be leading the championship after what I've been through after the last few weeks," he said. "But to come here, get some points and still be leading is awesome really."

A climbing pace by the unrelated Glenn Smith and co-driver Colin Smith continued their elevation in the standings, the Mitsubishi EVO 8 driver set consistently faster times to finish the day fourth for the leg.



RALLY OF ROTORUA RESULTS

Asia Pacific Results		
1	Toshihiro Arai Tony Sircombe	Subaru Impreza WRX 2:54:31.5
2	Jussi Valimaki Jarkko Kalliolepo	Mitsubishi Lancer EVO 8 2:26:49.3
3	Katsuhiko Taguchi Mark Stacey	Mitsubishi Lancer EVO 8 2:58:33.9
4	Geof Argyle Jane Black	Mitsubishi Lancer EVO 8 3:01:01.6
5	Dermott Malley Stephen Smith	Mitsubishi Lancer EVO 8 3:13:12.6
6	Brian Green Fleur Pedersen	Mitsubishi Lancer EVO 8 3:15:09.4
7	Mitsuhiro Kunisawa Simone Bachmann	Subaru Impreza WRX 3:22:37.2
8	Chee Hong Kan Bernard Chin	Mitsubishi Lancer EVO 8 3:25:29.6
9	Julien Lenglet Karim Galinie	Honda Integra Type R 3:26:16.5
10	Fan Fan Jun Wei Fang	Mitsubishi Lancer EVO 8 3:32:22.3

NZRC Results (Leg 1)		
1	Richard Mason Hamish Fenemor	Subaru Impreza WRX 1:55:05.5
2	Chris West Garry Cowan	Subaru Impreza WRX STi 1:55:08.3
3	Mark Tapper Jeff Judd	Mitsubishi Lancer EVO 7 1:55:51.1
4	Sam Murray Stuart Jenkinson	Subaru Impreza WRX STi 1:56:54.2
5	Brett Martin Raymond Bennett	Mitsubishi Lancer EVO 8 1:57:15.9
6	Dean Sumner Jeff Cress	Mitsubishi Lancer EVO 8 1:58:05.3
7	Glenn Smith Colin Smith	Mitsubishi Lancer EVO 8 1:58:42.4

NZRC Results (Leg 2)		
1	Mark Tapper Jeff Judd	Mitsubishi Lancer EVO 7 1:00:27.8
2	Richard Mason Hamish Fenemor	Subaru Impreza WRX 1:01:11.5
3	Glenn Smith Colin Smith	Mitsubishi Lancer EVO 8 1:01:32.1
4	Brett Martin Raymond Bennett	Mitsubishi Lancer EVO 8 1:02:17.5
5	Dean Sumner Jeff Cress	Mitsubishi Lancer EVO 8 1:02:31.4
6	Emma Gilmour John Bennie	Mitsubishi Lancer EVO 6 1:02:32.2
7	Dylan Turner Sandeep Bansal	Mitsubishi Lancer EVO 6 1:04:17.0

Clubmans Results		
1	Dave Strong Bruce McKenzie	Honda Civic Type R 3:17:16.4
2	Ray Reid Scott Taylor	Subaru Impreza 3:18:13.4
3	Jason West Charmaine Helm	Suzuki Ignis 3:23:21.7
4	Mile McElwain Janine Lowe	Toyota Corolla AE86 3:25:19.5
5	Robert Murray Ben Harding	Mazda RX7 GPB 3:29:12.0
6	Cameron Young Steven Fisher	Mitsubishi Lancer 3:31:08.5
7	Darrel Manson Glen Davidson	Mazda RX7 3:32:18.6
8	Roger Goss Mike Matheson	Toyota Corolla 3:37:11.6
9	Mike Phear Kevin Wilcock	Toyota Corolla Levin 3:41:23.1
10	Andre Meier Adam Muir	Subaru Impreza 3:46:14.3
11	Chris Clarke Graeme Robertson	Nissan Sumo Estate 3:49:42.7
12	James Holder Richard Ellis	Mitsubishi Mirage 4:07:50.4

“The harder we pushed the better it went,” commented Smith, who edged Gilmour out by 14.8 seconds.

After closing yesterday’s Subaru 1-2-3 result, Palmerston North driver Sam Murray suffered with tyre choice that affected his car setup. Then an impact to the radiator mount in his brand new Subaru Impreza damaged the radiator – dramatically dropping him down the order to finish 20th for the leg.

Heading the casualty list, Dunedin’s Tom Pritchard ended his day during the second stage, incurring frontal damage to his Mitsubishi Lancer EVO 8 after hitting a small bank. “That’s motorsport,” he said. “We had a spin, and I had to try and avoid a tree on the outside. I just punctured the radiator when the intercooler was pushed back in to it.”

Kiwi 2WD duo Dave Strong and Shane Watkin carried on where they left off yesterday, leading the class to set times amidst the more powerful 4WD cars.

However Watkins charge ended in the fourth stage, when he slid off the road and bent the steering. That elevated the Toyota of James Holder to second, with Dunedin’s Jason West third fastest in the Suzuki Ignis.

Strong gave his car a lavish amount of praise at his 10th placing for the day – projecting it as the

perfect tool of choice for the Kiwi 2WD series: “I was totally at ease with the car, it just feels so safe to throw around,” said Strong as he described his weekend. “You can just back it in and it pulls around the corner. Even though it is a big car weight wise, you can maintain the momentum through the corner.”

Describing the standard nature of his Honda Civic, Strong added: “It’s just what it is – this is a 100% Group N car, and being so well balanced it’s a lot less physical to handle, it’s much easier to drive.”

Another casualty for the day was all female team of Lee-Anne Barns and co-driver Erin Kyle. Their Lancer EVO 8 was plagued with a fault that developed in the opening stage of the day. The duo forced in to retirement after a crack in the gearbox of their Mitsubishi Lancer EVO 8 caused oil to leak on to the clutch.

Following this weekend’s event, the cars and crews head north for the third round of the Parker ENZED New Zealand Rally Championship, to be held over Queens Birthday weekend in the Wairarapa region – a new round to the series.

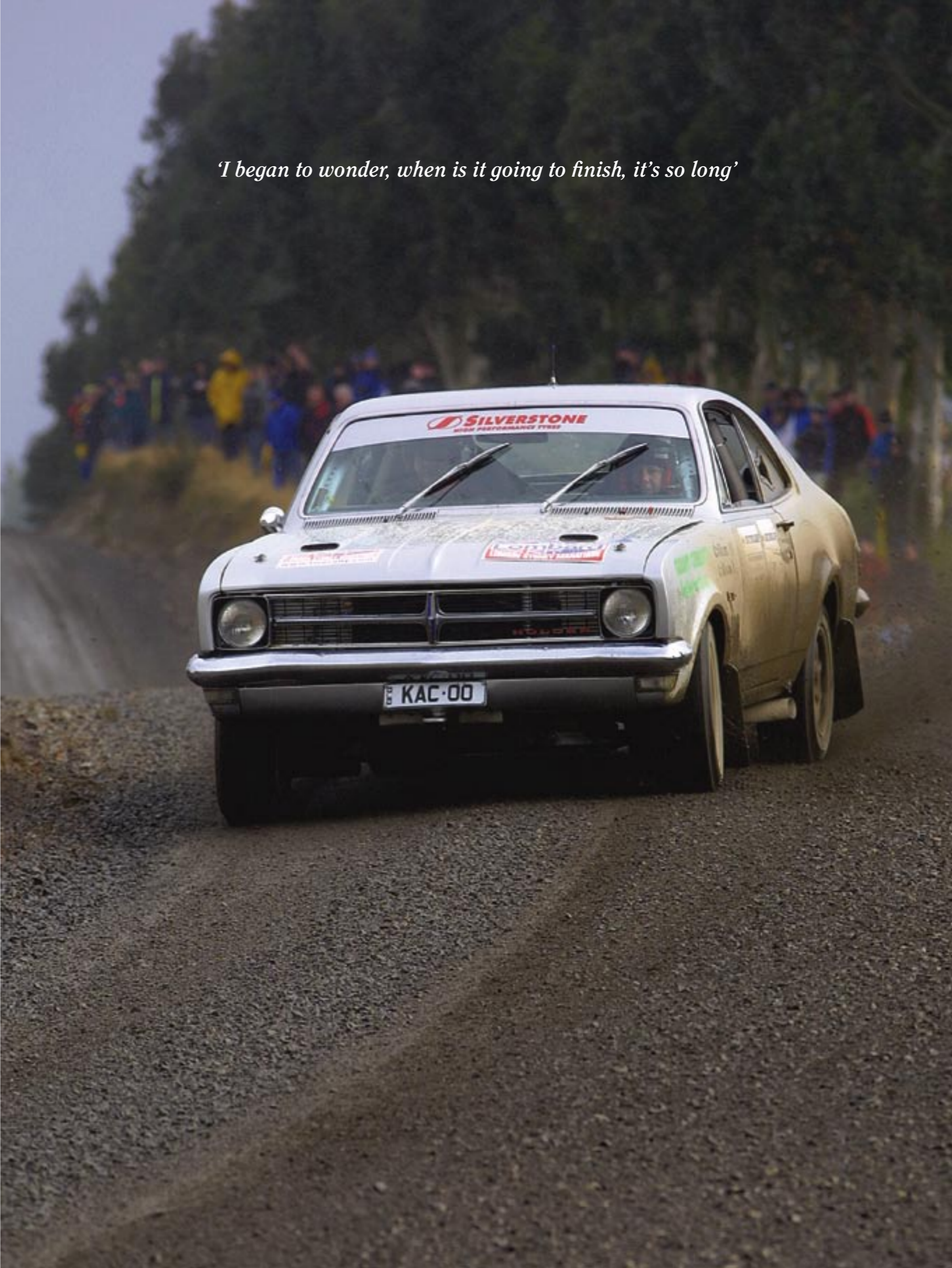
Hella International Rally of Rotorua

Toshi Arai from Japan has won the Hella International Rally of Rotorua, the third round of the 2005 Asia Pacific Rally Championship. In second

was the championship leader Jussi Valimaki from Finland driving a Ralliart MRF Mitsubishi Lancer Evo 8. Even though it was a technically difficult event, made even harder by the wintery wet conditions, all APRC competitors finished the event.

Arai and his Kiwi co-driver Tony Sircombe, the current leaders of the FIA World Production Car Championship (PWRC) are also competing in the 2005 APRC and after two rounds had no points and a good result on Rally of Rotorua was essential if the Arai and his team was to maintain any hope of taking the title for Subaru. The Japanese driver produced a faultless display to take victory by two and a half minutes, from series leader Jussi Valimaki. Once again the 47 kilometre Motu stage proved to be the decider, with Arai blitzing the rest of the APRC field by a full 50 seconds. “I began to wonder, when is it going to finish, its so long. Otherwise condition was not bad”, said Arai at the Motu finish control. Starting the second leg with a 1 minute and 41 second margin, Arai was able to cruise in the mid-winter wet conditions but still had a few minor excursions on the way to winning two of the day’s four stages.

For Jussi Valimaki this event was all about maintaining the championship lead. After the first 14 kilometre stage he led the event by 0.1 seconds from Arai, but decided the pace was



‘I began to wonder, when is it going to finish, it’s so long’



too hot to maintain “we proved we could be on the pace, but it was too risky. It was better to get points for the APRC series, that’s our priority so we backed off” said Valimaki at the end of Leg 1.

For Valimaki’s team-mate Katsuhiko Taguchi, just making the finish was the goal. After two non finishes from two events it was time to get some points and re-build confidence. Taguchi was very happy at the finish “We had a huge spin on the last stage, and I thought a number of times it was all over - again!!, but we are here and 3rd is good. Next is Hokkaido my home event”.

New Zealander Geof Argyle had promised his team a home-town win but niggling mechanical problems kept him far off the pace, but finished fourth to maintain his second place in the APRC standings, 18 points behind Jussi Valimaki (43 points). A frustrated Argyle commented at the finish “I’m disappointed because in Canberra we weren’t far off the pace and here it seemed we’re in a completely different rally. We have decided not to go to Japan and use the time for testing and development of the car. It’s a waste of time to continue getting 3rd and 4ths, we need to win to take the championship”.

Fifth APRC competitor home was kiwi Dermott Malley in a Mitsubishi Lancer Evo 8 who finally beat his old rival Brian Green in a similar car. “We had a great battle and always do, finally I beat him!!” said a jubilant Malley after the finish. Japanese driver Mitsuhiro Kunisawa was 7th in his 2nd international rally and looking forward to his home event next month.

After such a good result in New Caledonia the Wan Yu Rally team from China finished 8th and 10th after mechanical problems hit both cars on Day 2. Chee Hong Kan had turbo problems and was only able to continue when Brian Green lent him his spare, while team-boss Fan Fan hit one of the fords on SS5 (Whakarau) a bit too hard and took out his radiator fan, a piece flying off and knocking a huge hole in the Mitsubishi radiator (a similar problem led to Taguchi’s retirement in New Caledonia). Fan Fan and co-driver Jun Wei Fang were only able to continue by refilling the radiator every 5 kilometre until they got back to service in Matawai. Julian Lenglet from Vanuatu in a Honda Integra was 9th, after a controlled drive to take the 2-wheel drive points. 🇪



OTAGO RALLY RESULTS

NZRC Results			
1	Chris West Garry Cowan	Subaru Impreza	2:22:54.3
2	Richard Mason Sara Randall	Subaru Impreza WRX	2:23:20.6
3	Emma Gilmour Chris Randell	Mitsubishi Lancer EVO 6	2:26:46.8
4	Glenn Smith Colin Smith	Mitsubishi Lancer EVO 8	2:26:49.3
5	Brett Martin Raymond Bennett	Mitsubishi Lancer EVO 8	2:27:17.2
6	Dean Sumner Jeff Cress	Mitsubishi Lancer EVO 8	2:29:52.4
7	Mark Tapper Jeff Judd	Mitsubishi Lancer EVO VII	2:30:18.8
8	Marty Roestenburg Greg Horne	Mitsubishi Lancer EVO 8	2:31:19.5
9	Grant Barber Bede O’Connor	Mitsubishi Lancer EVO 8	2:34:10.0
10	Dave Strong Bruce McKenzie	Honda Civic Type R	2:37:41.1

Allcomers Results			
1	Dermot Martin Tony Witheridge	Mitsubishi Lancer EVO 4	2:35:44.4
2	John Giltrap Paul Millar	Subaru STI RA	2:37:01.0
3	Wayne Julian Dave Manzik	Mitsubishi Lancer EVO 3	2:39:40.7
4	Bruce Warburton Colin Davies	Subaru WRX RA	2:43:53.8
5	Brendon Mitchell Nigel Lawson	Datsun 1600	2:50:04.8
6	Darryl Campbell Anita Campbell	Mitsubishi Lancer EVO 1	2:53:33.9
7	Fred Merkin Marcus Van Klink	Subaru Impreza WRX	2:54:40.0
8	Nigel Milne Bevan Jones	Toyota Corolla GT	2:56:47.6
9	David Fletcher Andrew Reid	Suzuki GTi	2:57:05.1
10	Phillip Haar Craig Sharp	Subaru Legacy	2:58:11.2

Classic Rally Results			
1	Jimmy McRae Gary Smith	Ford Escort RS1800	2:33:27.0
2	Pasi Hagstrom John Kennard	Ford Escort RS1800	2:34:01.2
3	Duncan McCrostie Murray Marshall	Nissan Bluebird Turbo	2:40:27.7
4	Ashton Wood Ross Dixon	Ford Escort RS1800	2:40:41.5
5	John Spencer Alan Stean	Datsun 1600	2:41:20.8
6	Glen Buist Gregory Kennedy	Ford Escort RS1800	2:45:38.1
7	John Metherell Ian Dickson	Hillman Avenger	2:47:51.6
8	Chris Barnett Chris Lancaster	Mazda RX7	2:49:55.1
9	John Keast Paul Cross	Ford Escort RS1600	2:51:05.2
10	Warren Burt Mike Reid	Toyota Starlet	2:54:49.6



Pasi Hagstrom: WRC Test Driver

Pasi Hagström has found success on European and world circuits including winning the Finnish Championship in 1999. He has competed in the World Rally Championship for many years, and during that time consistently placed in the top ten. In 2002 Pasi become involved with the Subaru World Rally Team after Tomi Makinen approached him to work as his gravel crew. His skill behind the wheel was apparent for SWRT, who then recruited Pasi to be a test driver for the team. Mostly in Spain during the past year, he logged thousands of miles during development testing of the new Subaru WRC car.

In August 2003 Subaru Rally Team USA announced that driver Pasi Hagström and co-driver Marko Taskinen will drive for SRT USA for the remainder of the season.

Pasi Hagström was a three-time

Finnish motocross champion, when he made the switch to cars in 1991. Hagström is world’s only driver who has achieved World Championship points both in disciplines.

In 1997 first year in the Finnish Championship series with a competitive group A car, Toyota Celica GT-Four (the car made by Leif Asterhag). In Rally Finland he gained his first ever WRC points placing 6th overall. At the end of the season in 4th place in the Finnish Championship series. In the season 1998 he was third in the Finnish Championship series driving with the Celica and the last two events with the Corolla WRC. In the International Swedish Rally he was 11th and in the Rally Finland 9th.

In 1999, Hagström dominated the Finnish Rally Championship series winning the Championship with the maximum points. In Rally Finland he



drove alongside Carlos Sainz and Didier Auriol in the Toyota’s works team. The event started well, but ended in the beginning of the rally. His second possibility to drive in the Toyota’s works team in Rally Australia. Bad luck again - he was injured in the road accident before the event and was not able to contest the rally at all.

Pasi has contested the Otago Classic Rally for the last two years placing 1st and 2nd, both times behind the wheel of a fully prepped BDA Escort.



Top Half Series

March 18-19	Gisborne Whakatane Gisborne and University Car Clubs
April 30	Te Kuiti Hamilton Car Club
June 17-19	Rotorua Rotorua & Hamilton Car Clubs
July 9	Taranaki Taranaki Car Club
August 13	Maramarua Auckland Car Club
October 15	Paihia Northern Sports Car Club

Mainland Rally Series

June 11	Rally of Southland Southland Sports Car Club
July 2	Rally South Canterbury South Canterbury Car Club
August 6	Catlins Coast Rally Catlins Car Club
Sept. 11	Rally of Nelson Nelson Car Club
Sept. 25	Canterbury Rally Autosport Club
November (TBD)	Westland Rally Westland Car Club

Central Region Series

March 18-19	Gisborne Whakatane Gisborne and University Car Clubs
June 4	Kapiti Coast Various Regional Clubs
July 9	Taranaki Taranaki Car Club
July 29-30	Rally of Hawkes Bay Napier www.hbcarclub.com
August 20	Taupo Rally Taupo Car Club
October 1	Manawatu Manawatu Car Club