



2011 Quit Forest Rally

This year's Quit Forest Rally (QFR) was as action packed as ever. With warm weather leading up to the event, the Forest roads were dry and dusty which provided a unique challenge for the season opener.

As a round of the Australian Rally Championship, the QFR is effectively two rallies in one, conducted over two days. Teams have the opportunity to score points in both heats which count toward the respective championships.

Heat 1

Heat one started on Friday night on the Busselton foreshore with a tarmac super special stage of some 2.7km. Run in both directions on opening night, it was a chance for competitors to play it up for the spectators and have a bit of fun.

WA teams providing the most entertainment for the crowd were Leigh Hynes/Stuart Percival drifting around in their WRX and Kiel Douglas/Ashley Burton in their V8 Commodore. Both teams providing plenty of smoke and black strips out of the corners.

Into the forests of Nannup on Saturday morning, the real competition began on the 8 remaining special stages of heat 1. Many were finding the loose surfaces very slippery and a few were caught out early.

The top few competitors were swapping stage times as the day progressed, however heat 1 dramas started early for some. Brothers Mark & Steve Davies had problems on the way to Nannup with their new WRX and had to restart the rally later in the day after some repairs to the fuel system. Blair Pugh/Paul Helm had oil cooler and then alternator problems in their Ford Escort dropping them down the order early on day 1. After setting fastest times on the two early morning stages, Leigh Hynes/Stuart Percival had to bow out of the first day with some technical issues and opened the door for some up and coming competitors to shine.

By SS6 (the midway point of heat 1), Brother and sister Tom and Nerralie Wilde (WRX) were leading the rally with Nic Box/Ash Ridden (Lancer Evo 8) in hot pursuit. In SS6, the all girl team of Jo McIlroy/Karen Russell saw the world from another perspective when they slipped off the edge of the road and gently rolled their WRX. A small fire from oil leaking onto the hot turbo caused heat 1 retirement, however the girls' dedicated service crew recovered the car and worked late into Saturday night to make it competition ready for Sunday morning.

As teams completed the last two short stages around Nannup oval before heading into a 2 hour service, the results were in.

Mike Anderson/Mike Lloyd had brought their Spec C WRX to 10th place behind the always hard charging Julian Wright/Ian DeBoer in their fuel injected Datsun 1200. 8th went to Geoff Leatt-Hayter/Tammy Adams who flew the Ford flag in their Escort and John Macara/Sharon Black brought their well used Evo 2 to 7th place. John O'Dowd/Greg Allen (WRX) had a good run on heat 1 to finish 6th and Will Orders/Rian Calder took the 2WD honours and 5th place in their Nissan Silvia. Chris Anderson/Ben Searcy (Spec C WRX) finished heat 1 in 4th place with Tom & Nerralie Wilde (WRX) just in front in 3rd. Alex Stone/Hannah Drury brought their rapid WRX to the finish line in 2nd and Nic Box/Ash Ridden held off the competition long enough to take the heat 1 win by just under 22 seconds.

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Heat 2

Heat two started the same way as heat 1, with two laps around the tarmac at Busselton.

With everyone having “dialled” themselves in during the day, the race was on for Saturday night. The Holden/Ford stoush came down to Kiel Douglas/Ashley Burton (Commodore) and Geoff Leatt-Hayter/Tammy Adams (Escort). The first run saw the V8 Commodore take the Escort by just 0.4 seconds, the gap was a little wider on the second run and Holden led the way onto the dirt.

As Sunday morning and heat 2 dawned, the area had seen some light rain over night and a few light patches of drizzle in the morning. It was not enough to make the roads muddy, however it did keep the dust down for the first few cars and seemed to improve traction on some of the stages.

Straight off the bat some were having problems. John Macara/Sharon Black retired their Evo2 with gearbox and head gasket problems. Jo McIlroy/Karen Russell (WRX) had to contend with no wipers on the first couple of stages which made vision difficult in the rain, before a turbo hose problem dropped boost pressure for another couple of stages. Later into heat 2 the girls did find their form and set some respectable stage times. Kiel Douglas/Ashley Burton (Commodore) also suffered early with a puncture on the second stage of the day and dropped some time. Mike Anderson/Mike Lloyd were another pair to see the world upside down when they rolled their Spec C WRX into retirement early in Heat 2. Steve & Mark Davies (WRX) had thought they'd sorted their heat 1 gremlins during the early part of heat 2. The pair were setting times around the top ten and going well in their new steed until a blown turbo mid way through Sunday spelt retirement. Heat 2 had yet another surprise up its sleeve, this time for the Subaru RS team of Andrew McDonald and Adrian Broom. The pair rolled their Yellow machine heavily in front of the spectator point and made the evening news with their antics.

Further back in the field Graham Harper/Kori Mez and Peter Spight/Jon White (both in WRX's) were having their own private battle. For Harper/Mez this was their first rally in the new WRX and Spight/White had sorted some handling issues from last season. Both were trading times back and forth and by the end of the rally, Spight/White had gained the upper hand.

As the Heat 2 and the rally drew to a close, many recounted the eventful weekend. After 20 special stages and over 200km of competition the results read like this:

Rookie driver for the weekend was won by Dylan King who was ably co-driven by former Formula 2 ARC champion, Andrew Hannigan. Dylan had literally passed his driving test just a couple of days before the rally started and finished the event 14th outright in their Ford Escort. From the youngest competitor to one of the more mature in the event, Ray Russell who navigated for Tim Ralli took rookie navigator and 18th place in their Hyundai Lantra.

10th outright went to Julian Wright/Ian DeBoer (Datsun 1200) who had a ding dong battle over the weekend with Geoff Leatt-Hayter/Tammy Adams (Escort) who won the P3 class, the Clubman Cup and finished 9th outright. Raz Vlad/Damon Nicoli pulled out all the stops during heat 2 and took their M-Sport prepared Ford Fiesta ST to 8th place. A good drive rewarded 7th place to John O'Dowd/Greg Allen in their WRX and 6th was taken with another consistent drive by Garry

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Whittle/Ryan Doe (WRX). Will Orders/Rian Calder (Nissan Silvia) took the 2WD trophy for the weekend and 5th place with Chris Anderson/Ben Searcy bringing their Spec C WRX home neatly in 4th. Nic Box/Ash Ridden brought their Lancer Evo 8 to a well deserved 3rd and Tom & Nerralie Wilde took 2nd in their WRX. After a long time away from the State Rally Championship, Alex Stone & Hannah Drury (WRX) put in a brilliant performance to take the outright win and claim a good swag of points to kick start the year.

The next rally in the WARC and Clubman Series is The Experts Cup, due to run in Collie on June 11th.

For details & results on all rallies in WA, visit: www.rallywa.com

Karl Drummond