



PROMOTED BY THE MARATHON RALLY CAR CLUB INC.

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STOKES LEADS DAY ONE OF SILVER FERN RALLY

At the end of the first day's competition of the 2008 NZ Silver Fern Marathon Rally, it's 2006 all over again, as Kaiapoi's Brian Stokes and co-driver Grant Marra lead the field into Queenstown in their Ford Escort MKII.

However Stokes' small 37 second margin could be in doubt, as he experienced gearbox problems at the end of the last stage of the day, and reports "it sounds like fourth gear, we are flat out looking into what to do, but we should be able to get it fixed at service tonight."

Currently in second place is Christchurch's Jeff Judd and Greg Kennedy in their Ford Escort RS1800, with fellow Cantabrian's Andrew Grundy and Mark Smith in their Mazda RX7 just 5 seconds behind Judd.

Holding down an excellent fourth place overall is the baby Honda Civic driven by Aucklander Dave Strong, a further 16 seconds back. Strong began the day well and was up in second placing overall after three of the day's six special stages.

Considering Strong lost his Rally Car and a lot of his team equipment in the huge Auckland fire at his Strong Bros car dismantling business, and has only just rebuilt this his spare car, it's an impressive performance. Strong said "we have to take advantage of the day's fast stages as we don't compete quite so well in the tight stuff."

Amongst those to strike problems on today's first day of competition, was Palmerston North's Brian Green and Fleur Pedersen, whose Ford Escort WRC came to a halt with a suspected cam-belt failure, a repeat of what put them out of the event in 2006. This time however parts are being flown down from Auckland and the team lead by Neil Allport will attempt to repair the car overnight.



www.silverfernally.co.nz

NZ Silver Fern Rally													
Top 10 Overall Results for Day 1													
Pos.	No.	Driver Co-Driver	District	Vehicle	Cls.					Penalty	Total Time	Tbl	Tbn
1	1	Brian Stokes Grant Marra	Waikuku NZ	Ford Escort MkII	I					-	51:31	****	****
2	5	Jeff Judd Greg Kennedy	Christchurch NZ	Ford Escort BDA	B					-	52:08	+0:37	+0:37
3	28	Andrew Grundy Mark Smith	Christchurch NZ	Mazda RX7	I					-	52:13	+0:42	+0:05
4	17	Dave Strong Tim Driscoll	Auckland NZ	Honda Civic Type R	I					-	52:29	+0:58	+0:16
5	43	Craig Marshall Andrew Smith	Auckland NZ	Peugeot 206 GTi 180	H					0:40	52:38	+1:07	+0:09
6	26	Shane Murland John Benton	Paraparaumu NZ	Ford Escort	B					-	52:54	+1:23	+0:16
7	2	Jimmy McRae Pauline Gullick	Lanark SCOTLAND	Ford Escort RS1800	I					-	53:11	+1:40	+0:17
8	44	Dermot Martin Barrie Gibb	Christchurch NZ	Ford Focus	I					-	54:01	+2:30	+0:50
9	9	Charlie Evans Paul Matthews	Hamilton NZ	Mazda RX7	I					-	54:03	+2:32	+0:02
10	31	Nelson Marshall Allan Glenn	Hamilton NZ	Ford Capri V6	C					-	54:11	+2:40	+0:08

(for a complete listing of the days stage times, incident and field media reports visit www.silverfernally.co.nz)

The competing cars and their teams left a fine Christchurch at 7.30am and headed for the Geraldine area where a series of four short stages were tackled before a lunchtime service break in Fairlie. The afternoon saw stages near Tekapo and Tarras before crews ended the day in Queenstown.



Tomorrow's (Friday Oct 17) second day of the eight day event will see competitors travel out to the Alexandra area before returning again to overnight in Queenstown, where organisers have a dinner function planned for a-top the gondola.

The days competition stages will take place on roads in the Moutere (8.30am), St Bathans (9.30am), Crawford Hills (10.40am) before a service / lunch break in the Warehouse carpark in Alexandra at midday. In the early afternoon the teams will tackle the two Nevis stages (25km in and back out again), before returning to service on Lake Rd Frankton at around 2.30pm, then back to park up overnight at Whakatipu High School from 3.30pm.

The event then travels to Dunedin, Invercargill, back to Dunedin, up to Timaru and Christchurch before finishing at the new Marlborough Convention Centre in Blenheim on Thursday October 23rd at 3.30pm.

The 2008 NZ Silver Fern International Marathon Rally, currently being held over 8 day's in New Zealand's South Island, is the longest duration motor-sport event being held in NZ, and takes its roots from the Silver Fern and Heatway Rallies of the late 1960's & early 1970's.

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Dave Strong's Honda Civic R on the days first special stage

