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RALLY LEADER GRUNDY'S MAZDA IN TROUBLE

After seven of the eight days, things are hotting up on the leader board of the NZ Silver Fern International Marathon Rally. A severely overheated engine for leader Andrew Grundy and Mark Smith in their Mazda RX7, and the demise of fellow Cantabrian Brian Stokes in today's Lees Valley and Okuku Pass stages west of Christchurch.

Just as Stokes had clawed to within 30 seconds of the overall lead, his Ford Escort MKII experienced problems and he was forced to stop. After accumulating two stage maximum times, for the ones he didn't complete, Stokes now sits in 7th overall.

Then in the next stage Grundy's Mazda's electric cooling fan stopped and he was forced to drive to the stage end with an overheating engine, allowing Aucklander Craig Marshall and his English co-driver Andrew Smith to within 2-½ minutes of the event lead.

Speaking from the overnight stop at the Palms Mall Shopping centre in Christchurch, Grundy said "were unsure of how bad the engine is, it got pretty hot which isn't a real good thing, it may not even start in the morning."

Second placed Craig Marshall, said of his famous rallying father (Mike Marshall) "he's amazingly passionate, keeping the car and the driver on track. Were not sure what to do if we get to the lead, but it's not ours yet and there is still a day of rallying to go, we will drive at our own pace anything could happen."

Marshall added "it'll probably all change when we get to the first corner tomorrow, but we're enjoying the moment."



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Running in an excellent third place overall now is Englishman Grant Shand with co-driver Chris Parsons in their Ford Escort RS1800 at 10 minutes 18 seconds behind the leader Grundy. Shand who finished 6th in the 2006 Silver Fern Rally, attributes his performance this time to bringing his own car, one he says he knows well. (he leased a car last time).

Another of yesterday's top 10 to strike trouble was the Australian husband and wife team of Keith and Maryanne Callinan whose Ford Escort MKII sheared the flywheel bolts just a few kilometres into the Lees Valley Stage. "How bad is that" commented a still jovial Callinan. They have now dropped to 15th overall.

Further down the field in 42nd and 44th place respectively are the amazing little MGB GT of Auckland father and son team Paul and Andrew Walbran, and the Dutch Lancia Integrale driven by Flip vanZutphen with co-driver Theo Badenbergh. Both drivers report they are thoroughly enjoying the event.

Badenbergh has had a few lessons in NZ flora and fauna, initially asking about the "you have such beautiful scenery, and that pretty yellow flowing bush around Dunedin", then wondering if he should "take some home?" When he was informed it was a weed and common gorse, brought by settlers from the UK he said "we can probably get some there then."

A number of the competing cars have experienced rollover incidents, along with many mechanical problems, but over the seven days so far organisers have received only five permanent withdrawals. (competitors are allowed to repair their cars if they can and continue to be classified as finishers)

Tomorrow's (Thursday Oct 22) eight and final day of the event, will see competitors travel north thru Kaikoura before finishing the day and the event at the Marlborough Events Centre in Blenheim at 3.30pm.

The days competition stages will take place on roads in the Happy Valley (8.30am), Kaiwara (9.50am) and Fernihurst (11.15am) areas before a service / lunch break in the Kekerengu township at around 12.30pm. In the afternoon the teams will tackle a short stage at Kekerengu (1.25pm) before the Blind River (2.30pm) and Taylor Pass (3.05pm) stages before the event finish in Blenheim.

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.



NZ Silver Fern Rally

Provisional Overall Results as at end of Day 7

| Pos. | No. | Driver Co-Driver | District | Vehicle | Cls. | Day 1 | Day 2 | Day 3 | Day 4 | Day 5 | Day 6 | Day 7 | Penalty | Total Time | Tbl | Tbn |
|------|-----|---------------------------------------|------------------|---------------------|------|----------------|------------------|-----------------|------------------|-----------------|------------------|-----------------|---------|---------------|--------|-------|
| 1 | 28 | Andrew Grundy Mark Smith | Christchurch NZ | Mazda RX7 | I | 52:13 (3) | 55:45 (1) | 2:36:19 (2) | 1:46:54 (9) | 1:30:02 (1) | 1:47:45 (3) | 1:48:01 (11) | - | 11:16:59 | **** | **** |
| 2 | 43 | Craig Marshall Andrew Smith | Auckland NZ | Peugeot 206 GTi 180 | H | 52:18 (4) | 56:50 (3) | 2:38:10 (4) | 1:45:05 (6) | 1:33:48 (9) | 1:48:21 (4) | 1:45:04 (2=) | 0:20 | 11:19:36 | +2:37 | +2:37 |
| 3 | 6 | Grant Shand Chris Parsons | Woodbridge UK | Ford Escort RS1800 | B | 54:20 (10) | 57:48 (6) | 2:40:14 (8) | 1:45:17 (7) | 1:31:07 (4) | 1:53:03 (23) | 1:45:28 (4) | - | 11:27:17 | +10:18 | +7:41 |
| 4 | 9 | Charlie Evans Paul Matthews | Hamilton NZ | Mazda RX7 | I | 54:03 (9) | 58:12 (9) | 2:43:57 (10) | 1:44:37 (4) | 1:31:41 (5) | 1:50:11 (12) | 1:47:45 (10) | - | 11:30:26 | +13:27 | +3:09 |
| 5 | 11 | Brent Rawstron Ian McKee | Christchurch NZ | Ford Escort RS1800 | B | 57:05 (28) | 1:02:17 (28=) | 2:40:09 (6) | 1:50:20 (18=) | 1:32:41 (6) | 1:48:30 (5) | 1:45:04 (2=) | 5:20 | 11:36:06 | +19:07 | +5:40 |
| 6 | 14 | David Hills David Callaghan | NSW AUSTRALIA | Ford Escort RS1600 | B | 55:47 (21=) | 59:13 (12) | 2:44:28 (12) | 1:48:23 (12=) | 1:34:53 (12) | 1:49:31 (9) | 1:46:47 (6) | - | 11:39:02 | +22:03 | +2:56 |
| 7 | 1 | Brian Stokes Grant Marra | Waikuku NZ | Ford Escort MkII | I | 51:31 (1) | 1:09:00 (42) | 2:34:44 (1) | 1:40:23 (1) | 1:30:12 (3) | 1:45:06 (1) | 2:10:27 (39) | 1:00 | 11:41:23 | +24:24 | +2:21 |
| 8 | 22 | Euan Fuge Mike Gibbs | Feilding NZ | Mazda RX3 | C | 55:15 (15) | 1:00:51 (18) | 2:47:23 (16) | 1:48:23 (12=) | 1:35:08 (14) | 1:49:40 (10) | 1:47:36 (8=) | - | 11:44:16 | +27:17 | +2:53 |
| 9 | 10 | Simon Tysoe Rob Dyson | Leicester UK | Ford Escort RS1800 | B | 54:57 (13) | 59:22 (13) | 2:53:16 (30) | 1:47:43 (11) | 1:33:41 (8) | 1:48:43 (7) | 1:47:11 (7) | 0:40 | 11:44:53 | +27:54 | +0:37 |
| 10 | 27 | Willie Rutherford Chris Cunningham | Akaroa NZ | Porsche 911 | C | 55:43 (19=) | 1:00:34 (16) | 2:43:50 (9) | 1:49:56 (16) | 1:36:52 (22) | 1:50:04 (11) | 1:49:35 (14) | 0:20 | 11:46:34 | +29:35 | +1:41 |
| 11 | 42 | Allan Dipple Paul Coghill | Dunedin NZ | Toyota Corolla GT | H | 55:40 (18) | 1:01:53 (25) | 2:47:57 (18) | 1:50:20 (18=) | 1:35:27 (17) | 1:51:35 (15) | 1:50:51 (20) | 0:40 | 11:53:43 | +36:44 | +7:09 |
| 12 | 40 | Merv Hatcher James Cowles | Christchurch NZ | Mitsubishi Starion | C | 55:03 (14) | 1:01:33 (22) | 2:48:58 (19) | 1:48:56 (15) | 1:36:32 (21) | 1:52:23 (21) | 1:51:13 (22) | - | 11:54:38 | +37:39 | +0:55 |
| 13 | 51 | Ian Begg Greg Scott | Dunedin NZ | Volkswagen Golf GTi | B | 56:28 (26) | 1:01:28 (21) | 2:49:28 (20) | 1:52:39 (25) | 1:37:00 (23) | 1:52:19 (20) | 1:50:49 (19) | - | 12:00:11 | +43:12 | +5:33 |
| 14 | 39 | Peter Jackson Hadley MacKay | Dunedin NZ | Citroen Xsara | F | 57:31 (29) | 1:01:22 (20) | 2:50:43 (24) | 1:51:02 (21) | 1:36:26 (19) | 1:51:45 (16=) | 1:51:51 (23) | 2:10 | 12:00:40 | +43:41 | +0:29 |
| 15 | 25 | Keith Callinan Mary Anne Callinan | MacKay AUSTRALIA | Ford Escort | B | 55:47 (21=) | 1:00:11 (15) | 2:44:01 (11) | 1:46:50 (8) | 1:34:04 (11) | 1:48:56 (8) | 2:12:11 (41) | - | 12:02:00 | +45:01 | +1:20 |

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For a complete listing of the days stage times, incident and field media reports and detailed maps of the event, visit www.silverfernally.co.nz)

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