

# Rally Hawkes Bay 2009

Hi all,

Welcome to the first report from the RDL Performance team for the 2009 season. The Rally of Hawkes Bay was the beginning of both RDL's and my National Championship debut. The aim for the first national rally and this year in general is constant improvement and finishing all events. This year is a learning year and with such a wealth of knowledge assisting me, it makes a great foundation for building good car speed and results.

The event comprised of two days of rallying based out of Napier with forestry and public road stages giving a broad variety of roads. During recce it was obvious that there is a large difference in the roads compared to those in the Mainland. High crowns and small runs offs made the rally challenging for us and all the other crews.

Recce was like diving in the deep end and not being able to swim but with my lifeguard Crunch helping me out we did a good job of reviewing the notes. A great deal is able to be learnt through this process. It is so crucial that things such as car placement and lines are correct to build confidence in the notes.

The timetable for recce was a bit of a joke, originally planned to be completed by around 4:30, the first of the cars were arriving back to the ceremonial start at 8:15!! At the beginning of the day the CoC claimed that the route had been checked and times were correct.... in a rally car at rally pace maybe!

Meanwhile, Dave Laughlin had arrived and found a million things which were not quite right on the car (apparently drivers are not very good at car preparation?). Dad and Dave had made these tweaks during the day and the car was ready at ceremonial start for us when we arrived back.



Day 1 of my NZRC career dawned, actually no it didn't, bloody early mornings meant we were driving out to the start in the dark. But, when the sun did eventually rise, a beautiful day followed. Most of the day was spent concentrating on relaxing in the car and listening to the notes. With this being my first event of pace notes, it was obvious that it would take time to get tuned into listening and corresponding the numbers into corners. Crunch was not entirely speaking a different language and throughout the day I found that I was absorbing more and more of the information.

Initially we were slightly off the pace compared to the other rookie and juniors but given that it was the first day we were not so concerned with car speed and more interested in finishing. This proved to be an excellent strategy with Kieron Hall, Sloan Cox and Adam Bligh all retiring. The decision was made in the afternoon service to not bolt on new tyres, instead we ran on rather second hand tyres which had been used in the morning. Day 1 ended with us in 10th in NZRC, 4th Rookie and 4th Junior.





Day 2 was again crisp and clear. The retirements continued on stage 1 with Sloan Cox and Kingsley Thompson stopping on the same corner after a ford with identical sump guard problems! Our day was fought with tyre problems, on some stages they were great for the first half and then went off during the second half. Other stages we tried a different compound and they simply did not work. Despite this, our pace improved compared to both the overall leader and rookie leader.

During this day the notes also flowed much better and I got the stage where I could trust both the notes and myself to be in the right place.

The car ran faultlessly and the day was encouraging from the increase in pace and the commitment shown at times. At the end of Day 2 we were 7th in NZRC, 2nd Rookie and 2nd Junior.

From here the next round is a little closer to home in Dunedin on the 16th/17th May. I'm looking forward to being on slightly more familiar ground and am going to be pushing to be the top Rookie and Junior.

The Club 500 is up and running, if you have not received any information about this or would like to talk to me then feel free to give me a call. It would be great to have you as a part of it!

Regards,

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RDL Performance Rally Team

