

Local Hero Goes For Rally Gold

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What do you want to be when you grow up? The question all men are asked early in their childhoods. The answer is never a cubicle-bound paper-pusher. At an early age all boys aspire to be someone great, someone heroic, someone inspirational such as a firefighter or a race-car driver. Sadly, most of us end up spending our days replying to email chains or sitting in meetings discussing the next fiscal budget.

Meet Bill Bacon, rally race-car driver for Bacon Motorsport Team and a professional firefighter from Chemsford, Massachusetts. In case his resume does not sound impressive enough add president, and the only employee, of a small garage door installation company. Just for good measure throw in race-car builder, fabricator, mechanic and the guy who sweeps the floor at the end of the day.

At an early age Bill became obsessed with rally racing, a form of motorsport that uses factory-based vehicles in time trial races which go over gravel, snow, mud and just about everything but typical tarmac. Having spent countless hours watching rally races on television, there was no doubt in young Bill's mind that this is what he wanted to do. In 1999 Bill purchased a used Acura Integra Type R and with the help of his father built it to a rally specification and begun racing.



Fast forward a decade and Bill is still racing. He has since moved to a Mitsubishi Lancer Evolution and is currently ranked second in [Rally America](#), the biggest sanctioning body for rally races in the United States. He is racing in the most competitive group, open-class, which allows for most vehicle modification which results in the fastest cars. The one thing that has not changed however is how the Bacon Motorsport Team is operating.

The thirty-thousand dollar Mitsubishi was purchased at a dealership in a very conventional way, but what happened to it next is anything but. In order to prepare the car for the tortures of rally racing it had to be completely disassembled; plush interior met the dumpster while the driveline components were removed and upgraded for race use. Safety roll-cage was welded, chassis reinforced and everything was put back together to resemble a factory car. The most amazing part is that all of this work, which took over forty-eight weeks to complete, was performed by [Bill and his father in the garage of their suburban home](#).



In Rally America's Open-Class, where Bill is competing for the third year, his direct competitors are the almost-household names of Travis Pastrana and Ken Block; ask your twelve-year-old car-nut for confirmation. Both of these drivers are backed by corporate sponsorships, an energy drink and a clothing line, respectively. Bacon Motorsport Team has no such budgets and therefore no line up of support trucks, spare parts (not to mention cars) or mechanics in matching outfits. The amazing part is that in his first full season of competing, Bill is leading both of these internet sensations by a significant point margin.

On July sixteenth, in Newry, Maine, the last leg of the Rally America National Championship Series will commence. Lasting three days and going through two states, it is known as the [New England Forest Rally](#). Bacon Motorsport Team is entering the race in a solid second place overall and is guaranteed to finish the season there unless the current leader, Antoine L'Estage, comes upon some bad luck.



The schedule and locations of the rally race can be found at NewEnglandForestRally.com. Unlike most motorsport events, admission to all stages of the rally is free. Rally racing atmosphere is also much different than most motorsports; there are no fancy grand stands, no banked tracks. Instead spectators who line up alongside the gravel race course often bring chairs or blankets. Before the start of each race all teams and drivers are completely approachable for quick interviews, pictures and autographs. Overall atmosphere is very pleasant and family friendly, you can even bring your dog!

With his great success in rally racing Bill Bacon is living out his childhood dreams. Icing on the cake has been a recent **invitation to the X-Games in Los Angeles at the end of July**. Unfortunately the 2011 season is still an unknown for Bill. While the idea of a home grown race team is a heartwarming one, the reality is that in the days of soaring costs, a race team without sponsorship cannot remain competitive for long. May the man who should be considered an inspiration to kids of all ages have the best of luck in season's final race. Everyone can help support the local hero by going to the race and cheering on the white Mitsubishi as it flies over the finish line.

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