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RALLY AMERICA WRAPS SUCCESSFUL FIFTH SEASON

Sunday, October 25, 2009



Travis Pastrana scored his fourth-consecutive driver's title after another incredible season on the 2009 Rally America circuit for Subaru Rally Team USA.

The action-sports veteran took the Jon Woolf Cup with six outright wins in nine starts and also earned the X Games 15 Rally Car Racing silver medal. Christian Edstrom, who returned to Pastrana's side in 2009 after a year-long hiatus, took the Grant Whittaker Cup as the top co-driver.

The championship runner-up was Andi Mancin, who also debuted in the X Games Rally Car Race this summer in Los Angeles. After establishing a reputation as a competitive driver in his native Poland, 2009 saw Mancin run his first full season in the United States in a

Mitsubishi Lancer Evolution IX. NOS Energy backed Andrew Comrie-Picard rounded out the top three and scored a top-five finish at X Games 15 in his Mitsubishi Lancer Evolution IX.

The hotly contested new Super Production class saw fierce competition all season and came down to the final round when Colorado's Jimmy Keeney took the Roy Donnison Super Production Cup by just one point over Ohio's Pat Moro. Keeney's wife Melissa Keeney was the winning Super Production class co-driver for 2009. The Keeneys also made their first appearance at X Games this summer, while Moro attended as the alternate, both in similarly prepared Subaru WRX STI rally cars.

In two-wheel drive, series newcomer Dillon Van Way, from Louisiana, took a decisive victory after putting in a consistent performance all season in his Ford Focus to earn the Jon Woodner Cup. The teenaged Van Way's season highlight was a dramatic demonstration of his real commitment to the tough sport of rally when he finished the Rally Colorado after a rollover. Colorado's Keith Rudolph was the top two-wheel drive co-driver for 2009.

The 2009 Jeff Moyle Memorial Rookie of the Year Award went to the National Guard-backed Mark Fox who took the step up from regional competition to contest every round of the Rally America national season. He and co-driver Jake Blattner finished the season ranked seventh overall.

Two events, the Oregon Trail Rally and the Rally of the 100 Acre Wood, were jointly awarded top honors for the 2009 Rally of the Year.

Awards were distributed Sunday at the Rally America National Championship Awards Banquet presented by BFGoodrich Tires in Houghton, MI.

A simplified class structure, another exciting X Games and steadily increasing entries marked Rally America's fifth season as the premier sanctioning body for rally sport in the United States.

The national class structure was simplified to three classes in an effort to increase the sport's appeal for fans and competitors alike. The change was a success with the new Super Production class for lightly modified, production-based vehicles bringing out intense competition at every round. Subaru Rally Team USA even added a third driver to their roster, signing BMX superstar Dave Mirra to contest the class. He joined Open class drivers Travis Pastrana and Ken Block on the factory team.

As expected, the fourth X Games Rally Car Race provided a season highlight for fans. Although not a points event for Rally America competitors, the high profile contest features select top series competitors, plus top racers invited for their credentials in the racing community at-large. Former Indy 500 winner Kenny Brack took the gold in an Olsbergs Motorsport Evolution Ford Fiesta, in the manufacturer's first appearance in the contest. Pastrana earned silver for Subaru and Tanner Foust took Ford's second medal, the bronze.

Series entries were on the rise as the economic tide began to turn at the mid-point in the 2009 season. Entries were up an average of two per cent over 2008, with New England Forest Rally boasting a 50 entry field in 2009 -- up an astounding 67 per cent thanks to a series of inventive marketing initiatives this year.

As further demonstration to its commitment to the growth and success of rally competition, Rally America has recently announced positive changes to its championship calendar and its expansion into the exciting sport of European-style rally cross.

Also in 2010, Rally America officials will once again be involved ESPN's Summer X Games competition, the leading action sports event broadcast live on ABC and ESPN. X Games 16 is scheduled for July 29 to August 1, 2010.

Considered by many to be the extreme sport of auto racing, rally car racing is often described simply as "real cars, real roads, real fast." This all-season motorsport sees drivers and their co-drivers take modified road cars to the limit as they achieve blistering speeds over courses that cover more than 100 miles of gravel, dirt or snow-covered roads. Among the marques typically represented in Rally America events are Subaru, Ford, Mitsubishi, Dodge and Volkswagen.

The 2009 Rally America championship was made possible with the assistance of Subaru of America, DC Shoes USA, BFGoodrich, Mazda, Lanson Champagne, defNder, and Fulmer, with contingency support by Exedy Racing Clutches, Q Racing, and Endless USA.

The 2010 Rally America season begins in January at Sno*Drift, January 29 – 30, in Atlanta, Michigan.

For more information regarding Rally America, Inc., the 2010 Rally America National Rally Championship or the new European-style rally cross events taking place at the New Jersey Motor Sports Park in the fall of 2010, please call (763) 553-2742 for details or visit www.rally-america.com.



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