

DAY 4 REPORT

01-12-16

REID AND NEILL TAKE SILVER FERN RALLY LEAD

A blue Mk 2 Ford Escort RS1800 still leads the 2016 New Zealand Silver Fern Rally at the end of the fourth day. But this time it is the #5 car of Australian Stewart Reid and Kiwi co-driver Dave Neill, not the virtually identical #10 example (and sister car) of the leaders at the beginning of the day, Meirion Evans and Lestyn Williams from Wales.

Evans and Williams won the first of today's seven stages (the 12.23 km Donald west of Milton) and spent the rest of the day in a pitched battle with the other Mk 11 Ford Escorts of Reid and Neill (a car Reid bought off Evans), Keith and Mary-Anne Callinan, fellow husband and wife pair Brian and Anne Stokes, day winners Simon Tysoe and Paul Morris, and Kiwi pair Shane Murland and John Benton



However on the second to last stage, east of Matura, Evans and Williams ran off the road, losing enough time in that and the final stage over Chittocks Hill and into Gore to gift the lead to Reid and Neill, albeit by a margin of just over five seconds.

It was day of changing forces for a number of the 40-plus crews still in the event, none more so than local heroes Derek Ayson and Gavin McDermott from Gore.

After taking the lead of the Challenge category (for more modern or modified classic cars) in their Nissan-engined Mk 2 Ford Escort on the third day, Ayson was setting a cracking pace up front today only to run wide in a corner and roll a tyre off a rim through Stage 24 near Waipahi.

Though he was able to change the tyre, and repair some damage to the Escort's rear brakes, without incurring a time penalty, he lost enough stage time to slip back to second in class behind arch-rival Dave Strong and co-driver Rob Scott in Strong's late model Honda Civic Type R.

Fellow Challenge category front-runners, Charlie Evans and Sue O'Neill, also ran off the road and lost time, their Honda Civic looking worse for wear but still mobile and running at days' end despite a high-speed roll.

Dunedin builder Brodie Anderson and co-driver Brad Lyons, though still classified an impressive fifth in the Challenge class in Anderson's Mk 2 Ford Escort, were in for a long night tonight fixing crash damage sustained this afternoon.

After a night in Gore tonight the field heads back to Dunedin tomorrow after stages in the Catlins and South Otago.

A highlight for many will be a short publicity stage on the new concrete course laid out INSIDE the Forsyth Barr Stadium for the D1NZ National Drifting championship which Dunedin is also playing host to this weekend,

Ends

2016 NZ Silver Fern Rally Christchurch-Gore-Christchurch Mon-Sun Nov 28-Dec 04 2016

Overall classification after Day 4

Historic

1. Stewart Reid/Dave Neill (Ford Escort Mk2 RS1800) 5:58:47.1
2. Meirion Evans/Lestyn Williams (Ford Escort Mk2) 5:58:52.7 +0:05.6
3. Keith & Mary-Anne Callinan (Ford Escort Mk2 RS1800) 5:59:18.4 +0:31.3
4. Jake Scannell/Chris Lancaster (Toyota AE86) 6:01:50.6 +3:03.5
5. Allan Dippie/Paul Coghill (Porsche 911) 6:02:34.7 +3:47.6
6. Phil Squires/Nigel Hutchinson (Ford Escort) 6:03:52.2 +5:05.1
7. Shane Murland/John Benton (Ford Escort BDA) 6:05:33.8 +6:46.7
8. Vince Bristow/Tim Sayer (Ford Escort Mk2 RS1800) 6:05:53.8 +7:06.7
9. David Hills/Paul Bennett (Ford Escort RS1800) 6:06:02.4 +7:15.3
10. Brian Green/Fleur Pedersen (Ford Escort RS1800) 6:06:56.7 +8:09.6

Challenge

1. Dave Strong/Rob Scott (Honda Civic Type R) 5:51:18.0
2. Derek Ayson/Gavin McDermott (Ford Escort) 5:53:18.5 +2:00.5
3. Charlie Evans/Sue O'Neill (Honda Civic 1800) 6:01:39.5 +10:21.5
4. Ed Mulligan/Tony Brandon (BMW E30 325i) 6:17:39.2 +26:21.2
5. Brodie Anderson/Brad Lyons (Ford Escort Mk2) 6:23:29.8 +32:11.8
6. Darryl Campbell/Phil Walker (Toyota Altezza) 6:25:11.7 +33:53.7
7. Warren Briggs/Gerry Bashford (Ford Mustang) 6:27:54.7 +36:36.7
8. Brent Taylor/Chris Ramsay (Toyota FT 86) 6:33:49.1 +42:31.1
9. Mike Wheatley/Tudor Davies (Ford Escort Mk2) 6:40:47.0 +49:29.0
10. Bruce Herbert/Jim Hey (Mitsubishi Lancer EX Turbo) 6:46:59.7 +55:41.7

Ends

CAPTION:

New leaders of the 2016 NZ Silver Fern Rally at the end of the fourth day are Australian Stewart Reid and Kiwi co-driver Dave Neill (#5 Ford Escort Mk 11). Dunedin pair Brodie Anderson and Brad Lyons (#45 Ford Escort) were quick before they crashed. Also now looking worse for wear after a high-speed off is the #33 Honda Civic (seen here earlier in the day) of Charlie Evans and Sue O'Neill. Photo credits: Fast Company/ProShotz

Prepared by FAST COMPANY on behalf of the Ultimate Rally Group. To find out more about the 2016 NZ Silver Fern Rally go to the website at www.silverfernally.co.nz. To talk to Ultimate Rally Group CEO and event spokesperson Peter Martin tel 0-9-298 8322 or 0274 525 643. To get in touch with event media man Ross MacKay from Fast Company tel/txt 021 677 919 or e-mail on ross@fastcompany.co.nz