

DAY 5 REPORT

02-12-16

REID EDGES AHEADS BUT AYSON THE BIG MOVER ON DAY 5 OF SILVER FERN

Australian Stewart Reid and Kiwi co-driver Dave Neill managed to retain their Silver Fern Rally lead for a second day today but the big mover as the event returned north after a stunning morning in the Catlins was local hero Derek Ayson and co-driver Gavin McDermott in the Challenge class.

While Reid and Neill spent a fraught day trading seconds rather than minutes with the virtually identical Ford Escort RS1800s of day winners Brian and Anne Stokes, Welsh ace Meirion Williams and co-driver Lestyn Williams, and Keith and Mary-Anne Callinan, Ayson and McDermott turned a two minute deficit on arch Challenge class rivals Dave Strong and Rob Scott into a 15+ minute lead by the time they returned to parc ferme at Dunedin's Forsyth-Barr Stadium late this afternoon.



Calling on all his local knowledge, Ayson - who used to farm in the area and now works as a rural real estate agent in Gore - was quickest overall (both Historic and Challenge classes) through four of the six stages, and even in the one he was pipped in in class by former national champion Bruce Herbert and Jim Hey (Mitsubishi Lancer EX Turbo), he and Herbert were still quicker than the first Historic car through the stage, the Mk2 Ford Escort RS1800 of three-time Welsh Rally champions Meirion Evans and Lestyn Williams.

The relentless pace eventually told on early Challenge category pace-setters Dave Strong and Ron Scott who rolled out of contention on the 26.49km Rohrl km stage south-west of Kaka Point.

The stage also claimed 2014 event winner and number one seed Vince Bristow and co-driver Tim Sayer in Bristow's Mk 2 Ford Escort RS1800, as well as the Ford Mustang of British-based Kiwi expat Warren Briggs and British co-driver Gerry Bashford.

With Strong and Scott no longer snapping at their heels it was left, first to Brent Taylor and Chris Ramsey in Taylor's Toyota 86, then - when their luck also ran out - to expat Scott Ally MacKay and his local co-driver, Andrew Graves of Gore, to try and keep Ayson and McDermott in sight.

Also quietly easing up the leader board in the Challenge class is veteran Australian rally driver Ed Mulligan and co-driver Tony Brandon in Mulligan's BMW 325i.

After five of the seven days of the 2016 event now run, the pair are third in class behind Ayson and McDermott and the battered but unbowed Honda Civic 1800 of Hamilton rally veteran Charlie Evans and co-driver Sue O'Neill.

A roll at high speed late on Thursday afternoon looked - for a few seconds anyway - like ending their event, but when the car ended up back on its wheels, Evans turned the key, it started and he and O'Neill continued, and the car was good to go after some overnight attention, this morning.

Stewart Reid and Dave Neill still have work to do to remain in front of the baying pack of Ford Escort RS1800s in the main Historic category with Evans and Williams less than a minute back and the first of the husband-and-wife combinations, Keith and Mary-Anne Callinan third overall just over two-and-a-half minutes behind.

Also emerging as a threat for a final podium place is Allan Dippie from Wanaka and co-driver Paul Coghill in Dippie's Porsche 911. The pair are now fourth overall in the event rankings, five minutes behind Reid and Neill but also three ahead of the fifth placed Ford Escort RS1800 of one of the other British entrants in the event, Phil Squires and Nigel Hutchinson.

After a bonus publicity stage on the indoor drift course at Dunedin's Forsyth-Barr Stadium this evening the Silver Fern event then heads north for stages in North Otago and South Canterbury before a final overnight stop at Timaru's Caroline Bay tomorrow (Saturday) evening.

Ends

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

Overall classification after Day 5

Historic

1. Stewart Reid/Dave Neill (Ford Escort Mk2 RS1800) 7:49:17.9
2. Meirion Evans/Lestyn Williams (Ford Escort Mk2 RS1800) 7:50:07.8 +0:49.9
3. Keith & Mary-Anne Callinan (Ford Escort Mk2 RS1800) 7:51:57.0 +2:39.1
4. Allan Dippie/Paul Coghill (Porsche 911) 7:54:43.3 +5:25.4
5. Phil Squires/Nigel Hutchinson (Ford Escort) 7:57:51.7 +8:33.8
6. David Hills/Paul Bennett (Ford Escort RS1800) 7:59:11.6 +9:53.7
7. Brian Green/Fleur Pedersen (Ford Escort RS1800) 8:01:02.1 +11:44.2
8. Brent Rawstron/Ian McKee (Ford Escort RS1800) 8:05:18.8 +16:00.9
9. Stuart McFarlane/Brad McFarlane (Porsche 911) 8:07:04.1 +17:46.2
10. Brian Stokes/Anne Stokes (Ford Escort RS1800) 8:12:23.2 +23:05.3

Challenge

1. Derek Ayson/Gavin McDermott (Ford Escort Mk2) 7:40:28.5
2. Charlie Evans/Sue O'Neill (Honda Civic 1800) 7:55:47.1 +15:18.6
3. Ed Mulligan/Tony Brandon (BMW E30 325i) 8:13:38.4 +33:09.9
4. Brodie Anderson/Brad Lyons (Ford Escort Mk2) 8:20:48.8 +40:20.3
5. Darryl Campbell/Phil Walker (Toyota Altezza) 8:24:38.8 +44:10.3
6. Bruce Herbert/Jim Hey (Mitsubishi Lancer EX Turbo) 8:37:14.9
7. Mike Wheatley/Tudor Davies (Ford Escort Mk2) 8:45:34.5
8. Dave Strong/Rob Scott (Honda Civic Type R) 8:57:36.6
9. Brent Taylor/Chris Ramsay (Toyota FT 86) 8:58:53.8
10. Tony Quinn/Cassidy Solomon (Toyota 86) 9:32:21.7

CAPTION:

Australian Stewart Reid and Kiwi co-driver Dave Neill (#5 Ford Escort Mk 11) continue to lead the 2016 NZ Silver Fern Rally at the end of the fifth leg in Dunedin. Dominating the event today, and regaining his lead in the Challenge category was Gore driver Derek Ayson and co-driver Gavin McDermott in Ayson's Nissan-engined #30 Ford Escort. Ayson's pace told on his class rival Dave Strong who with co-driver Rob Scott rolled on Stage 31. Another pair to crash out on that stage were Warren Briggs and Gerry Bashford in Briggs' Ford Mustang. 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