

MEDIA RELEASE

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GRAVES WINS CATLINS RALLY

Gore driver Andrew Graves took victory in the 2010 Catlins Coast Rally in his Mitsubishi EVO 3 today. In doing so he became the only person to win the event as both a driver and a co-driver. In 2005 he was in the co-drivers seat when good friend Derek Ayson won the event.

Graves was stoked, describing it as his "best win ever." "I'm absolutely chuffed. It's an old car but this is a well deserved result for the whole team. Lindsay Tressler spent the last two weeks preparing the car and it ran faultlessly. It was very frosty in Special Stage 2 and in the fourth stage we lost the back shock absorber so for the last few stages we had no shock. That made the car a bit indecisive!"

Graves took the lead on the third stage after fellow Gore driver Paul Cross had set the quickest time in the opening stage in a Mitsubishi EVO 8 he leased for the event. Kaikoura driver Regan Ross then moved into the lead after the second stage. However Ross succumbed to engine problems in Stage 3 joining the other top seeds, Dean Bond and Jeff Judd in retirement.

Bond, the defending champion, was out early when his gearbox expired in the first stage while third seed Judd blew a turbo one stage later. When Ross pulled out soon after the top three seeds were out of the event before the halfway mark. Graves won four of the remaining stages and took victory from Cross by 18 seconds. Cross won the other two stages to add to his win in the opening stage.

Third place went to Steve Wellington of Dunedin in a Mitsubishi EVO 6 RS, heading off Oamaru driver Scott Simpson in an EVO 4 by just 1.9 seconds. Clinton driver Derek Ayson in his Nissan powered Ford Escort was fifth and the first two-wheel-drive car home while John Giltrap of Lincoln was sixth in his Subaru Impreza WRX.

Invercargill driver Neville Krammer did a fine job in his Subaru Legacy to finish seventh while Blenheim drivers Jim Vause and Richard Bateman plus Gore driver Craig Abernethy completed the top ten.

Barry Mills of Balclutha did an outstanding job in his Hillman Avenger to place eleventh while Canterburys Marcus Van Klink was inside the top ten in his smartly driven Toyota Corolla only to lose time over the final two stages due to a gearbox problem.

Other major retirements were Duncan McCrostie of Kaitangata who left the road in the first stage, Mike Wellington of Dunedin who hit a post which subsequently damaged his windscreen in the second stage and Paul Dickson of Timaru who lost oil pressure in the second stage. Others who failed to finish were Nigel Marshall of Wyndham. Roger McKay of Winton, Invercargills Richard Clapperton and Paul Gouman of Clydevale.

The Rosebank Lodge in Balclutha, MWH, Southroads, Owaka Motors, the Clutha Licensing Trust and Century Batteries were again the major supporters of the rally, the tenth anniversary of the event.

The rally was Round 3 of the Mainland Rally Series and Round 2 of the Laird Motorsport Southern Rally Series which is fought out by drivers and co-drivers with a residential address in Southland, Eastern

Southland or Otago.

Lindsay Beer
Publicity Officer
Catlins Coast Rally
021 351 499

For further comment: Roger Laird - 03 208 5247/0274 368 876