



BOND TAKES HIS SECOND CATLINS COAST RALLY



2011 Catlins Coast Rally winners

Dean Bond and Ross Moody of Balclutha in their Mitsubishi EVO 6.5 power past some of the large crowd that turned out to watch the event on Saturday

Photograph Euan Cameron

Dean Bond of Balclutha was a convincing winner of the Catlins Coast Rally on Saturday.

It was the second time in three years that Bond had won the event after he also tasted success in 2009. In taking the victory Bond and co-driver Ross Moody won the Darryl Robinson Memorial Trophy and also the Kerry O'Donohue Memorial Trophy for being the first South Otago crew home. The win also clinched second place in the Mainland Rally Series for Bond and puts him in great shape in the Laird Motorsport Southern Rally Series with one round to go.

Bond took the lead in his Mitsubishi EVO 6.5 during stage three after early leader Derek Ayson left the road. He went on to win by 1 minute 48 seconds from last years runner-up Paul Cross of Gore in an EVO 8. Last years winner Andrew Graves, also of Gore, was third in a Mitsubishi EVO 3. Fourth was Rangiora driver John Silcock who was focused on gaining enough points from this event to win the Mainland Rally Series, a target that he achieved. He also won Class D in the event.

The win was a contrast to Bonds first Catlins victory two years ago. On that occasion he made a late charge to win the event by 2.2 seconds. This time he won three of the eight special stages and was never out of the top three, building his lead steadily throughout the day.

Bond was rapt with his second Catlins title. "It was better than the first in some ways," he said. "Once we made the lead the pressure was on us. We battled issues all day. We had brake problems, the car was eating up brake pads and it was a bit twitchy which kept us amused. We had a couple of near misses too. It was great to win the Kerry O'Donohue Trophy as well. Kerry was a mentor to me during my younger days so it means a lot."

Cross did a great job to take second in a leased car in his first rally since last years Catlins Coast Rally. "We had no problems at all. We had a great battle with Andrew (Graves). We knew Bondy would be out of reach as long he had a consistent run with no mechanical issues."

Ayson was the early leader in his first outing in his new Mitsubishi EVO 8 but he went off the road in Special Stage 3 after winning the opening two stages. Fellow Gore driver

David Kirk towed him back onto the road, Ayson describing him as a "true legend". "That's why I go rallying everyone helps everyone. There is true camaraderie." The excursion cost Ayson half an hour, dropping him well down the order. However he resumed, charging back to win three more stages, demonstrating the potential of his new car.

The same stage also claimed 2007 winner Kieran Hall of Nelson who holed a radiator when he left the road and also delayed Greymouth driver Graham Ferguson who had been setting top ten stage times in his Ford Escort.

Tony McConachy of Palmerston North did a fantastic job in his Hayabusa powered Toyota Starlet to secure fifth overall, the first 2-wheel-drive car to finish and to also take the honours in Class A. Balclutha driver Barry Mills, who always produces a magnificent performance at this event in his ageing Hillman Avenger, gained his best ever finish with sixth place overall. That effort gained him the Class F title. Rhys Gardner of Balclutha was another to produce his best ever Catlins result with seventh place in his Toyota Trueno, winning Class B in the process. Gardner had not competed for two years, his competition license having lapsed in the intervening period. He also had a little good fortune on his side prior to the event after suffering engine problems. His parents were in the United States at the time and were able to bring a fresh set of pistons home from the factory 40 kilometres away from where they were staying. Neville Krammer of Wallacetown was eighth and the winner of Class E in his Subaru Legacy with Neville Kidd of Cromwell ninth and first in Class C in his Ford Escort while Brent Tiney of Christchurch was tenth in his Ford Escort, wrapping up Class G. Nigel Marshall of Wyndham did a fine job to bring his Datsun 1200 home in eleventh ahead of Cameron Moore of Christchurch. Marshall missed the top ten by just six seconds.

Other major casualties during the day in addition to Ayson and Hall were Steve Wellington of Dunedin with a blown head gasket while engaged in a battle for fourth place and Bert Murray of Waimate with a blown diff after an impressive start.

Cleve Kokshoorn of Greymouth Escort set some top ten times but struck problems during the middle stages while Marcus Van Klink of Kaiapoi in a Toyota Corolla went off the road in stage one only to return with some top stage times later in the rally.

Legendary Australian Ed Mulligan finished nineteenth in his Ford Escort while Gore driver David Kirk with MotorSport NZ General Manager Brian Budd on board as his co-driver retired with clutch failure soon after he rescued Ayson. However Kirk reported the clutch was showing signs of failure before towing the stricken car.

The Glen Shirlaw Memorial Trophy for the top Otago Sports Car Club crew went to Oamaru couple Peter & Cherie Fridd who finished twenty-eighth overall in their Toyota Starlet while the Monit Rally Computer Awards for the top Novice driver and co-driver went to Dennis Beattie of Cromwell and Blair McLaren of Balclutha respectively.

Major support for the event is provided by Century Batteries along with MWH, the Rosebank Lodge, SouthRoads and Owaka Motors.

Lindsay Beer
03 217 4288
021 351 499

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