

MEDIA RELEASE

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PADDON APPEARANCE A TREAT FOR RALLY SPECTATORS

Spectators at this year's Catlins Coast Rally on Saturday will get a rare treat as Hayden Paddon makes an appearance at the event at the wheel of his Hyundai i20 AP4.

Paddon is the only kiwi driver to ever win a World Rally Championship event having won 2016 Rally Argentina. He was the 2011 Production World Rally Champion and has won the New Zealand Rally Championship four times, in 2008, 2009, 2013 and in 2018. He currently resides in Cromwell where he operates Paddon Rallysport.

Paddon will be running as a lead car in the event, not actually competing as he treats the day as a test day. He will run with notes which none of the competitors in the event will have as Catlins is a blind rally.

"There have been no rallies for quite a while," explains Paddon, "so it is a test session and time in the seat. I was last at Catlins fifteen years ago and it will be nice to do it," he says. "The Eastern Southland Car Club have been helpful in allowing me to do it. I haven't done a blind rally for about fifteen years either so there was not much point testing without notes."

Paddon will be running pretty hard over the stages though. "We want to test a few things and try a few things and to get the best out of these cars you have to push them. We need to get the best information we can from the test so we have to replicate rally conditions."

Paddon did Catlins in 2003, 2004 and 2005 and has great memories of the 2005 event in particular. "We had a good rally and a good battle with Derek Ayson who was the man to beat. We beat him on the first Special Stage which we enjoyed as his ex-girlfriend used to live on the stage so he knew it well. He had the last laugh though. We blew the clutch on Stage 5."

While there has not been any rallying of late Paddon is exceptionally busy. I have a lot of projects on the go he says. "We have the EV rally car that we are working on, we have several motorsport events coming up and we are working on a few more customer vehicles. There is a nice variety of hillclimbs, rallies and races coming up and we are cherry picking what we will be doing. We are making up lost ground."

What does Paddon remember about Catlins? "My memory is a bit vague on it now, but I remember the roads were nice and flowing. There were some fast stages and I enjoy them. I am sure my test will serve as a good reminder."

The rally will commence at 10.00am on Saturday 8 August from Campbell Street, adjacent to Owaka Motors in Owaka and will feature approximately 153 km of high-speed Special Stages before concluding back in Owaka just after 3.30pm that afternoon. Servicing will be held throughout the event in Owaka.

The Eastern Southland Car Club is delighted to have the support of the Clutha Licensing Trust through their Rosebank Lodge Balclutha establishment, plus Southroads, Owaka Motors, Yuasa Batteries and Stadium Finance. The club is also especially grateful to Rayonier Matariki Forests, the Clutha District Council and the McNab Family for their assistance with the event.



Lindsay Beer

On behalf of the Eastern Southland Car Club

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Photograph: Hayden Paddon during the 2019 Otago Rally in the Hyundai i20 AP4

Photographer - Geoff Ridder