

MEDIA RELEASE

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STOKES NAME ON CATLINS RALLY ROADS AGAIN

The name Stokes is a well-known one in New Zealand rallying and Robbie Stokes and his sister and co-driver Amy of Waikuku are representing the family name to the high standards set by their parents Brian and Anne Stokes before them.

Brian was the New Zealand rally champion in 1985 and 1988 and is still active in the sport while Robbie was just eight weeks old when he attended his first Rally New Zealand and Amy just three weeks old when she first went to the Ashley Forest Rallysprint. Growing up in that environment it was probably inevitable that Robbie and Amy would follow in their parents wheel tracks but Amy says there was never any pressure to do so. "Robbie and I both love what we do and although there was no pressure Mum and Dad love we are doing it too."

The duo is having an awesome season too. They are tied for the lead in the Group N 2-wheel-drive National Championship, Robbie with Mike Sheehan in the driver points and Amy with Glenn Goldring in the co-driver points.

They are right at the pointy end of their class in the Mainland Rally Series of which Catlins is the final round too, Robbie tied with Kevin Lynch in Class B and Amy just one point behind Dean McCrostie.

They arrive at Catlins in strong form. "Our results have been really good," says Amy, "it's been good to show what we knew we could do." The season started with a big hiccup though when they rolled twice at Otago and their Ford Fiesta R2 ended up submerged in a pond in a very scary incident. Since then they have rallied a borrowed car and Catlins will see the return of the chassis that was crashed at Otago. "Reliability is the biggest thing with it," says Amy. "The whole car has been rebuilt. It has been a huge, huge job. It has only been running again for two weeks and we are hoping it goes well. We have trust in our team though and our man Ian is mad about rallying and doesn't finish a job until he is happy with it."

This will be Robbie and Amy's first time at Catlins although they did see some parts of the stages in the Silver Fern a couple of years ago.

The siblings are aiming to run an AP4 car next year but first there is the business of winning the Class B Mainland Rally Series title at Catlins and then doing their best in the National Championship.

This year's Catlins Coast Rally is the fifth and final round of the Mainland Rally Series and part of the Eastern Southland Car Club Rally Championship.

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.

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Robbie and Amy Stokes in their Ford Fiesta R2 at the 2019 Westland Rally

Photograph: Terry Marshall / Euan Cameron Photography