

MEDIA RELEASE

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SUMMERFIELD KEEN TO GIVE CATLINS A NUDGE

This year's Catlins Coast Rally which takes place on Saturday 8 August will see one of the best fields in the history of the event as many of New Zealand's top drivers line up for the 20th Anniversary of the rally.

One such driver is Matt Summerfield of Christchurch who will drive his Mitsubishi Mirage AP4 in the event. Summerfield has been at the pointy end of the New Zealand Rally Championship for many years with a best result of second overall in 2017 and has seldom been out of the top four since 2014.

Summerfield has done the Catlins event several times before and was in contention last year, battling with Andrew Graves until he went off the road in his Subaru in Stage 4 of the event.

"I would love another battle with "Duggie" (Graves), but he is fast down there. It would be good to get one over him at home, we will have a nudge at it in the Mirage."

Like many in this year's event Summerfield says, "it's a bit odd. We have never had such a big break during the season. It is pretty exciting, Catlins will be my first big rally of the year. The West Coast in March was a shakedown."

Summerfield has entered three sprints since the sport got up and running again. "I did Circle Hill in Otago, it was good to get some miles and get used to the car again, it is relatively new and it takes quite a while to get used to it."

Summerfield says he loves the Catlins Coast Rally. "It is a nice rally to do. Cannibal Bay is a favourite – it is good fun."

With the New Zealand Rally Championship cancelled for 2020, Summerfield says he is keen to do well in the Mainland Rally Series. "It would be nice to get something for the mantlepiece," he says.

The rally will commence at 10.00am on Saturday 8 August adjacent to Owaka Motors and will feature approximately 153 km of high-speed Special Stages at Puaho, Catlins Valley, McNab's Farm, Tawanui, Cannibal Bay and Romahapa.

The event will conclude at Owaka at 3.40pm that afternoon.

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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Photograph: Matt Summerfield in action in the Mitsubishi Mirage

Terry Marshall / Euan Cameron Photography