

MEDIA RELEASE - 29 SEPTEMBER 2023



ROBINSON ENCOUNTER LEADS KIRK TO MOTORSPORT

David Kirk of Gore has been around motorsport for many years, but he credits Mokoreta farmer, the late Barry Robinson, after whom the MLT Barry Robinson Memorial Wyndham Rally on Saturday 7 October is named as having been a catalyst for his involvement in the sport in a “roundabout way”.

Kirk was an apprentice panel beater at GWD in Gore back in the mid-1980's when he was tasked with helping repair the right rear guard on Robinson's' Vauxhall Chevette. That was Kirky's first foray into motorsport and from then on, he became an avid rally watcher, either standing on a corner watching or acting as a Block Marshall in Special Stages to ensure no one entered the rally route. He has gone on from there becoming a respected official who has held many different roles both locally and nationally in motorsport.

Part of those roles was running and acting as Clerk Of The Course for the Wyndham Rally for a couple of years during its original heyday in the 80's and 90's.

As the rally returns to the calendar on 7 October this year, Kirky will be there again, this time driving the Safety Car, a role that requires him to drive through the Special Stages prior to the double zero and zero cars and make sure the road is safe and ensuring spectators are behind the tape at spectator areas. Once at the end of each stage he will radio in indicating the stage is clear and good to start.

In addition, Kirky's employer Advance Agriculture is sponsoring Special Stage 5 of the event, the Advance Agriculture Ltd Gore/Invercargill/Balclutha Pulsar Gti-R Tuturau Stage.

“It is about giving something back to the sport, a sport that has been pretty good to me.”

Kirk has also competed later in life but for the Wyndham Rally he has leased his car, a Ford Fiesta AP4 to Derek Ayson of Gore. “Derek approached me and it has been really good because as we have both been working on it. That has been good for me. Derek is more than capable and he already finished fourth in a sprint event in it despite really only taking some of my mates for rides rather than going all out. He will love it!”

As it was Robinson that indirectly sparked Kirk's interest in rallying what does he remember of Barry. “He was an all-round good guy. My fondest memory would be at the start of an event seeing him smoking a San Remo thinking about the day ahead. He never looked nervous, he had natural ability and could do what needed to be done. He had speed and a desire to win, he was very talented.”

The rally will be centred on the township of Wyndham, 45 kilometres east of Invercargill and 25km south of Gore. It will start at the MLT Three Rivers Hotel in Redan Street, Wyndham at 9.30am on Saturday 7 October from where competitors will embark on five Special Stages consisting of 126km of magic, gravel special stages with no stage repeated throughout the day.

The rally then ends where it began, at the MLT Three Rivers Hotel in Wyndham after 126km of Special Stage competition linked by 110km of touring stage mileage.

With the start and finish plus two Service Parks in Wyndham, the township will be a real focal point of the event.

The event prizegiving will take place in Gore at the MLT Croydon Lodge with the winning crew awarded the Barry Robinson Memorial Trophy. The rally also carries points toward the Eastern Southland Car Club Rally Championship.

Rally Secretary, Roger Laird says, “we are delighted to have the support of Mataura Licensing Trust, as our naming sponsor, plus that of Traffic Management Services, Rayonier NZ, the Southland District Council, Gore District Council, Prime Range Fresh Shop Lorneville, Matt McRae and the landowners on the rally route plus of course all of our Special Stage sponsors.

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Photograph –David Kirk's Ford Fiesta AP4 that he has leased to Derek Ayson for the MLT Barry Robinson Memorial Wyndham Rally with Ayson at the wheel – credit to ODT