

Vlakovlei Rally

Witzenberg Motorklub

10 April 2010

Ashley Haigh-Smith and Hilton Auffray surprised even themselves when they won the WBMK Vlakovlei Rally in the REACT Marketing class A6 CPMCC Toyota Corolla RXi 1600. Ashley recently became the youngest rallyist to win a class on a national rally when he won class A5 on the Toyota Dealer Rally and now the Swartland talent is also the youngest ever win a Western Cape regional rally overall.

Thorsten Pey and Mark Palmer made sure that he earned the victory by running a close second for most of the event. Stage five saw the Teletubbies loose a high speed argument with a fence post and with the front wheel alignment askew on the Winning Business Solutions / Forsdicks Tygervalley class S4 WBMK BMW 325i they dropped 1.5 minutes and put their service crew to the test to mend the damage before tackling the final stage. Veltie Doetrich and his merry men working wonders to keep the BMW in the running.

Newcomers, Sebastiaan and Daniël Klaasen, ran consistently in their class S5 / N4 CPMCC Subaru Impreza STi 4x4 Turbo but a blown turbo on special stage five saw them slow dramatically to eventually finish their second rally just 41 seconds ahead of the REACT Marketing class S2 / N2 CPMCC Mitsubishi Lancer GT1600 of Andy Haigh-Smith and Patrick Vermaak. With no chance on sheer performance they simply gave everything (and a little more here and there) and to their own surprise the yellow submarine even posted second fastest time on SS5 to make this a memorable fourth overall The highest overall position ever by this amazing rally car.

Team George, alias André George and George du Toit, started slow after their roll on the recent Toyota Dealer Rally but gradually returned to form to finish an encouraging fifth overall in the neatly rebuilt Flying Fridge class S3 Toyota Conquest RSi 1600. In sixth overall it was Team Aged, alias Jerry Bailey (MSA Technical Delegate) and Brian Hoskins (Clerk of the Course Killarney) in their class S1 / A5 WPMC VW Golf Chico 1.4i. Showing honest signs of strain afterwards Jerry and Brian really charged hard towards the end of the event. Cannot maintain this pace all day at their age but good to notice the occasional spurt!

The combined ages of youngsters Divan de Goede and Henry Köhne possibly does not match either of the Golf's inhabitants but they had to accept a three second defeat at the hands of the "oumanne". Nursing rather tired shockabsorbers the West Coast duo did themselves proud to finish seventh overall and third in class S3 with their almost standard N2 Toyota Corolla RSi 1600.

Gavin Grierson and Paul van Greunen eighth in the tailhappy class S4 Nissan Skyline 2.8 GTX and they even shed some weight when Gavin smeared the left rear against a gate post. Second in class S4 rewarding on an event that simply does not suite the heavy rear wheel drive cars. Derrick "Swart Sarel" Benjamin and Adrie Stander should have been higher than ninth overall but the throttle body on the class S4 VW Polo 2.0 came adrift on special stage five, costing them at least three minutes.

Warren Scholtz and Justin Gay might only have been tenth overall, but when you finally succeed in finishing your first event it feels like overall victory. Well deserved in the class S3 VW Polo 1.8. Eleventh and the final classified finishers were Paul Emmanuel and Jody Eadie in their class S1 / A5 VW Golf Chico 1.4i. They too lost serious time in SS5.

Kesevan Naidoo and Daniël Blaser had to call it a day at the start of SS6 when the Freightmore class S3 Toyota Conquest RSi 1600 refused to engage a gear. Definitely the disappointment of the event as they were fifth overall after the second stage and looking good for an encouraging result. Clinton and Keenan Sassman were credited with the fastest time on SS1 but they believe it should have

been fourth fastest only. What did however impress was the fact that the neatly prepared class S4 E30 BMW 325i was fourth overall after special stage four before suspension failure saw them retire.

Llewellyn Jones and Craig Gray retired after SS1 when the class S4 VW Golf TDi 2.0 refused to perform whilst Stefanie and Willem Hugo disappeared into the scenery on SS1 with the Wiel / Select Cars class S3 / A6 Toyota Corolla Rxi 1600. To her defence father, Willem, failed to inform her that shortly after the flatout R2 there was an extremely slippery R9 to negotiate and the result was a somewhat bent Toyota. Even more unfortunate was Harry Giliomee and Fritz Blom who had to retire their class S3 Toyota Corolla Bredvan before even reaching scrutineering. The gearbox failing as they drove it off the trailer.

The 155km event saw two stages repeated three times, starting and finishing on the farm Vlakvlei. Du Toit and Magda Schreuder and neighbours the fabulous hosts for the event. Fantastic to experience this much enthusiasm by the farmers to have these events run on their property. Round four will be run much in the same format but will be starting at 21h00 on Friday evening 7 May 2010. A proper night rally is something that has not happened for many a year and very few of the current teams have ever contested a night event.

Patrick Vermaak

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Unfortunately Abduraghman Amlay and Garth Ritsch could not capitalise on the mishap as their class S3 / N3 Toyota Run X RSi 1.8 had expired from the overall lead in special stage two with a blown engine.