



Sara's Notes—May 2011

OFF SEASON

Hi Everyone. Yes it has been a long time since a newsletter has been published! Richard and I have been busy little bees over the last year—mostly owing to our little baby boy (who I keep being reminded isn't actually a 'baby' anymore!). Khalid is 13 months old now and is fantastic fun—he is very active and started walking at 9 months so is very steady on his feet. He hasn't missed a rally yet and we absolutely love having him be a part of our motorsport—it sure is a family sport as Richard's mum Alison takes great care of him for us. He has already gained an absolute fascination with steering wheels, tyres and dad's helmet as shown below.

So what has been happening with the Mason's? We've been very busy at our workshop—Toms Auto Services which has been great. This coupled with a lot of preparation and a little bit of testing on our rally car has ensured we haven't had a free weekend in a long time. We really missed motorsport over our off season so got our twin 8 year old girls Danielle and Jessica to test go-karts to see how they liked it... this resulted in one jumping over a crest into a soft barrier and the other spinning into the infield. They were very quick though and it certainly took some convincing getting them to stop. Unfortunately sibling rivalry reared its ugly head as Jessie decided to give Dani, who was parked up over the finish line, a bit of a fright. This ended not quite as Jess planned... she locked up the brakes and careed straight into the back of Dani's kart! They're both now begging for go-karts so watch this space.

Khalid on the other hand, he still has his eye on our Prodrive car..

He is debuting a new and exciting set of clothing at Rally NZ so keep an eye out for him ... you won't be able to miss him! :)



RALLY OTAGO

The 2011 Rally Season kicked off with the fastest rally of the championship—Rally Otago on the 8-10th of April. This year it brought with it a new challenge—night stages! Our focus for the rally was well and truly on finishing as with the change in points system this year, it was vital we did so.

Friday night was average for us. Saturday morning we re-evaluated our position and set out to improve our car set up. We knew coming into the event it was going to be difficult to chase for victory with the fuel situation (as explained below) but points were the goal. Improve the car we did, resulting in a second fastest time on the last gravel stage of the day.

We were much happier coming into Sunday, running on all but one stage used in previous years—this means checked notes so you're not committing to something you decided on after one pass! On these high speed stages and taking into consideration that our self preservation instincts are still intact, this means a lot to us! These Sunday stages are fantastic; the famous Kuri Bush, McIntosh Road and Waipori Gorge are real favorites with any driver or co-driver who has ever had the pleasure of driving them at speed.

We were stoked to finally get a stage win (and in the process a stage record) through the second to last stage Waipori Gorge. We were up to second for the day—with a fast Westy and Sumner not far behind. The last stage of the day was going well until we clipped an unseen rock and the left front tyre began to shed its tread, so with about 10km to go all that was left was threads of canvas. Incredibly, the Dunlop tyre, although badly damaged, did not actually puncture. It just so happened to be the most slippery, muddy, fast downhill section of the rally and so we lost considerable time with a serious lack of traction! We ended up 4th for the day and 4th for the weekend.

In hindsight, we should have concentrated more on the preparation for the night stages and carried out night testing campaigns like other competitors but lesson learnt for the future!

The other important lesson learnt was fuel. Most of the field is running on a fuel called e85, this is an 85% ethanol based fuel. This was what many opted for last year as well, but for various reasons mostly based around engine cost and deterioration to fuel tanks etc we have run on pump/road fuel.

As shown at Rally Otago, it is now something we need to reconsider to go forward. With varying reports on the performance gains—some are suggesting a 15% gain in power which would be **HUGE!** Regardless of whether this is correct, it is still worth investigating!!!



THANKS

Big thanks to our fantastic crew who ensure the smooth running of our car—Eden, Ben, Murray, Dominick and Tom. Also big thanks to our engine man/advisor/engineer/comedian Dwight from ScottSpeed for continued support. Thanks Alison for taking care of Khalid over the weekend and for those yummy dinners! Thanks Chris Grant for doing a great job as per usual :) Thanks Greg and Pauline for coming down to support us and helping with times, as well as ferrying Alison and Khalid around. Thanks to all of our great family of sponsors who have continued or starting supporting us for the 2011 New Zealand Rally Championship.

Richard drove really well, especially on Sunday and the car behaved fantastically. Huge credit to Richard for the hours of preparation he carried out on the car as it didn't let us down. Even though he spent many cold nights working in the shed, its all worth it when lined up on the stage 1 start line.

RALLY NZ—7-8TH MAY

Next on the agenda is Rally New Zealand. My favourite event of the year! I LOVE these roads, they're fast and they're well cambered. They're tricky and technical and reward the brave but not the silly. I sure can't wait to get up there and 'get into it'. Luckily for me, I don't have to wait long as it is this weekend. The truck is loaded and we are finishing off the final preparations required.

The most amazing carrot is being dangled in front of us this weekend as the Rally New Zealand trophy is up for grabs. Yes the same one that Jari-Matti Latvala held in his hot little hands last year. This is rather ironic as I remember in 2006 fighting for the PWRC lead with Jari-Matti until we punctured on Whaanga Coast.

I'm optimistic that this event will be a good one for us. I'm really hoping this is the case, but we won't really know until the finish line of stage one or, more accurately, the finish line on Sunday afternoon.

Check out www.chrissport.co.nz for updates and progress results and www.rallynz.org.nz for spectator maps and schedules.



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CALENDAR

Round	Date	Venue	Website
1	8-10 April 2011	Rally of Otago	http://www.otagorally.net
2	7-8 May 2011	Rally New Zealand	http://www.rallynz.org.nz/
3	28-29 May 2011	Rally Wairarapa	http://www.rallywairarapa.co.nz/
4	15-17 July 2011	Rally of Whangarei	http://www.rallywhangarei.co.nz/
5	20-21 August 2011	Rally Hawkes Bay	

POINTS—POST RALLY OTAGO

Position	Driver	Points
1	Haydon Paddon	128
2	Dean Sumner	108
3	Chris West	89
4	Richard Mason	78
5	Glenn Inkster	68
6	Emma Gilmour	62

TV SCHEDULE

TV1 Coverage:

Rally Otago – Sun April 24 and May 1	Rally Wairarapa - Sun June 5 and June 12
Classic Rally Otago – Sun May 15	Rally Whangarei – Sun July 24 and July 31
Rally NZ - Sun May 15 and May 22	Rally Hawkes Bay – Sun Aug 28 and Sept 4

SPONSORS

We are proud to welcome Hopper Construction and Geartech into our group of partners and would also like to acknowledge our ongoing association with long time supporters *BNT*, MCA Suspension, Subaru, Dunlop, B.W.O'Brien, The PC Factory, ScottSpeed Performance Engines, Pagid, Randall & Associates, Quality Foods and Tom's Auto Services.



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