



**BNT Mason  
Motorsport**

22 April 2009

*The 2009 Rally of Hawkes Bay proved to be an excellent weekend, the sun was shining, the birds were chirping and our bring yellow BNT Subaru was on song! The first round of the year always brings with it anticipation, with no one quite knowing how competitive, reliable and fast their car will be.*

## **RALLY HAWKES BAY**

This year the organisers changed around many stages from the previous years by reversing them. This brought with it an exciting new twist. Due to this and the large amount of kilometres the rally comprised, recce took much longer than anticipated! We were due back to Napier at 4pm with the ceremonial start at 7pm but we didn't even arrive back in Napier until just before 8pm! It was only then that we really realised just how long the rally was to be, with more than 300km of special stages and 625km of touring over two days... this is not too far off the distance for a 3 day international rally!

Once over the ramp, I got stuck head down into working on my notes while the boys completed the last few finishing touches to the car. We all stayed with Richard's Auntie Pene and Uncle Colin Johnstone as we do every year and Richard's parents picked Dani and Jessie up from school and brought them up so it was great to also have our Team Girls with us.

## **DAY ONE**

Day one dawned fine, I love a sunny rally! We were running car number 2 on the road today so we were wary we might have dust issues.

Stage one was Waipunga, or as a lot of people know it as 'Darkey Spur' in reverse. This is a stage Richard has a lot of respect for... having crashed on it many years ago! We had a trouble free run, although we both felt a bit rusty having not driven on gravel for 6months! But we can't have been too bad as we won this stage and so lead the rally from the start.

Richard and I had great fun through the 3rd stage of the day—Putere (Waihi in reverse). This stage we retired on last year with a broken diff. Not this year! With only 1min gaps, we were chasing the car in front as you could see a long way into the distance. It was awesome and Richard got our Subaru humming through the undulating county road. Stage 6 was another memorable one, although for different reasons. It was a forest stage that was muddy, covered in pine needles and very narrow. Not our most favourite kind of road! Our engine started overheating so we had to back off in the second half of the stage.



## DAY 1 CONTINUED

Mohaka Coach was stage 7 and the last stage of the day. We were having a good run through until the engine started overheating again. With about 8km to go Richard turned off the antilag to reduce the temperature. However this made the car really hard to drive! We had a big spin on the exit of a corner with the car having no power to pull us out... very frustrating! But we made it to the end and didn't lose too much time.

So the result at the end of day 1? 5 out of 7 stage wins and a lead of 1min 13 seconds :)

However that night there was work to be done on the car... mainly we needed to renew the radiator to stop the overheating issues!

## DAY 2

Day two also dawned another gorgeous day. Richard and I were amped to continue our run from day 1 and take maximum points for the weekend—as well as get back that number 1 sticker on our door for Otago! Due to reseeding today we started 1st car on the road.

The first stage in Esk Forest went well with no more overheating issues. Next was Waitara... this stage is crazy! Its really fast at the start and then really twisty at the end and requires a huge change in rhythm. It was great to see the RSQKRU team at the time control at the start of the stage and having raided their lolly supply, we were asked to take their little toy lion for a high speed ride in the car. So I tucked him in and strapped him up for the ride of his life! Once at the finish I handed him over to the finish control who did look a little confused by it all!

After giving the car a quick pretty up in service we went off and repeated the days first two stages... this time without the lion! We had a good run through both. Next up was the well known publicity stage Triple Bridges. It was great fun with big jumps and lots of spectators out watching. Although with many nasty surprises like tree stumps hiding in the grass and having done recce in the dark, we took care through here.

Last stage up for the rally was the 21km Dartmoor. Although it wasn't all smooth running. Due to miscommunication we were running rather low of fuel! Richard and I made the call to run Dartmoor without antilag which consumes a large amount of fuel to ensure we got to the finish. It was a tough call to make but we had a really good lead and so we budgeted on loosing between 30seconds—1min. Richard drove really well, the car was such a handful with no pull out of corners it just wanted to spin us constantly, I don't know how he held it together! After the stage we waited anxiously to see how much time we had lost but we absolutely couldn't believe it when we found out we had still won the stage!

So the conclusion of day 2? 5 stage wins out of 6 :) We won the day by 59.1seconds and so in turn the rally by 2min 12 seconds. A perfect way to start the year and possibly our best start ever... although as we know from last year we must just take every rally as it comes!

## JUNIOR DRIVER

Kieran and Peter didn't have a great weekend - due to running out of spare tyres and a manifold blow-out! However when they was running, they ran very well! With a 6th position on the very first stage and a 3rd placing in Dartmoor. Well done guys and better luck at Otago!

## THANKS

Our boys are the best! Huge thanks to Dwight, Nick, Spud, Murray and Hamish for an excellent weekend and another professional job keeping our Subaru in the best shape. Thanks Mum and Dad Mason, Mum and Dad Randall, Danielle, Jessica and Jemma. Also thanks to Pene and Colin for having us to stay. Thanks to the timing crews, marshals and event organisers for a well run and great fun event!

Thanks BNT, Subaru NZ, Fram, Dunlop, The PC Factory, B.W. O'Brien, Randall and Associates, Toms Auto Services, UCD Quality Foods, Murray Coote Suspension, ScottSpeed Performance Engines, Pagid, Health Kix Osteopathy and Andersons Meats.

## WHAT ARE WE UP TO?

We have been very busy! Last weekend Richard and I attended my sister Becky's wedding to her long time partner Nick. It was a very nice wedding and I was honoured to be a bridesmaid. Mum also celebrated a major birthday last week but she would shoot me if I told you what one that was!

Next on our Agenda is the Rally of Otago, held on the 16th and 17th of May. The car is currently getting a freshen up ready for battle again down South.

## NZRC GOLD STAR POINTS

1	<b>Richard Mason</b>	<b>74</b>
2	Hayden Paddon	62
3	Emma Gilmour	52
4	Matt Jansen	41
5=	Josh Marston	32
5=	Patrick Malley	32

Check out [www.chrissport.co.nz](http://www.chrissport.co.nz) for more detailed results and points

For some great photos from Hawkes Bay check out;  
<http://www.richardmason.co.nz/cpm/index.php>  
[www.gridder.co.nz](http://www.gridder.co.nz)  
[www.lmsportphotography.com](http://www.lmsportphotography.com) and  
[www.seabrightmotorsport.co.nz](http://www.seabrightmotorsport.co.nz)

## TV COVERAGE

Coverage of The Hawkes Bay rally will screen on TV one **5-6pm** on Sunday the **3rd & 10th** May.

