

High Desert Trails Performance Rally Recap!

Written by Erik Christiansen
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Los Angeles – The 40th anniversary season of the California Rally Series (CRS) began May 3rd with the High Desert Trails Performance Rally, in Ridgecrest, CA. With new roads for 2014, the rally was extended to 127 total stage miles over two points-earning events all in one compact day. The new stages gave the rally a wide variety of scenery as the teams race from 1,800 feet all the way up to 7,000 feet and back down again! Located in the Jawbone Canyon / Piute Mountain area just 2.5 hours north of Los Angeles, the stages form a loop on what is considered one of the most scenic backroads in Southern California.

Winning both events overall was the Open class team of Todd McAllister and co-driver Trent Bateman. The team drove a clean rally in their Subaru STI, narrowly edging out the team of John Trucks and co-driver Christopher Fine, who took second place in both events, also driving a Subaru STI. McAllister/Bateman continued pushing to the very end, winning the final stage, dubbed the “Power Stage,” overall and most impressively setting a new record time for the Power Stage despite running after dark! Last year’s overall winners Jonathan Burke and co-driver Tom Morningstar took an early lead, but fell victim to numerous mechanical issues that forced them to withdraw from the event.

In the small-displacement two-wheel drive CRS-2 class, son and father team Bret and Doug Robinson claimed the class win for the first event, “Chaparral Stages.” Unfortunately, a stalling issue in their VW GTI led to their retirement on a transit during the evening’s event, “Mojave Stages.” Their withdrawal allowed the husband and wife team of Erik Christiansen and Amy Floyd (also driving a VW GTI) to claim the class win for Mojave Stages, after finishing second to the Robinsons during Chaparral Stages. Christiansen/Floyd capped off the event by setting the fastest 2wd time on the Power Stage.

In the popular Performance Stock (P-Stock) class, CRS veteran Tony Chavez and his co-driver/wife Raquel Salas claimed first place in both events. The team almost succumbed to overheating issues when their radiator fan stopped working, but fellow competitors worked together to rewire their fan, keeping them on the road.

The CRS championship moves from the deserts of southern California to the mountains of Idaho for the next event on the calendar, the Idaho Rally International, June 21 & 22, 2014. The two day event features over 100 miles of twisty, hard packed stages that attracts teams from all over the Western United States.

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The High Desert Trails Rally was first run in 1973 on roads to the southeast and west of Ridgecrest, CA. For 2014, the rally added new roads at high elevation around Sorrell Peak that gave the rally a unique, eclectic flavor. For more information on the High Desert Trails Rally, visit <http://highdeserttrails.com>.

The California Rally Series is the premier performance rally championship in the southwestern United States. The Series incorporates events from various sanctioning bodies in order to create a meaningful regional championship for its members. The 2014 season marks the 40th anniversary of the California Rally Series, making it the longest running rally series in the United States. To learn more about the California Rally Series visit www.californiarallyseries.com and follow @crspress on twitter.