

2019 California Rally Series Returns to Idaho for the Idaho Rally International this weekend!

Written by Erik Christiansen
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Los Angeles – The California Rally Series (CRS) Rally Championship returns to the mountains north of Boise, ID for the Idaho Rally International. The rally is back on the CRS calendar after a one year hiatus, but still has the same smooth and flowing roads that makes it a driver favorite. Competition takes place on June 22 and 23, 2019, with each day counting as a triple points event (Coefficient 3) towards the championship. The rally is the first of three sanctioned by the American Rally Association (ARA) on this year's CRS calendar (along with Rally Colorado and Prescott Rally). Idaho Rally International also marks the first event of the CRS Side by Side Championship, followed by Rally Colorado and the Gorman Ridge Rally. The festivities will kick off with a parc expose at Larry Miller Subaru in Boise, ID between 4:30pm and 6:30pm Friday evening where the fans will have an opportunity to meet the teams and check out the rally cars.

Hot off their victory at the High Desert Trails Rally last month, Jason Cochell and co-driver Robert Maselli are leading the Open Four-Wheel Drive class with their Subaru Impreza. They will face stiff competition in Idaho from last year's class winner Flynn Baglin who teams up again with co-driver Alix Hakala, in his Subaru Impreza STI. Ernie Manasala made the move from Open Lite to Open Four-Wheel Drive at High Desert Trails but was forced to withdraw. He is teamed up with veteran co-driver John Dillon and is hoping for better luck in Idaho.

Kurt Northrup and co-driver Will Smith come into Idaho in a familiar position leading the normally aspirated four-wheel drive Open Lite class in their Subaru Impreza. Class rivals Michael Seidman and co-driver Tommy Luhrs, also in a Subaru Impreza, were just about matching their pace at the last event, but fell short by less than a minute. With so many points at stake in Idaho they could catapult into the class lead with a strong finish.

2017 CRS-5 champion Andrew Cowan started off the season with a win in the large-displacement two-wheel drive class. He will be looking to build on that lead at Idaho with his VR6 powered VW Jetta. He will face stiff competition from Brad Morris and co-driver Doug Nagy who are always a contender in their Mitsubishi Lancer.

The small displacement CRS-2 class always has a strong turnout. Erik Christiansen and co-driver Amy Floyd come into the event in the championship lead. Their VW Golf GTI will be up against Eliza Coleman and Andres Bautista in their Scion xD, as well as Kyle McLennan and Tom Giese in a Ford Escort ZX2.

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The Performance Stock (P-Stock) class is a CRS tradition, where lightly modified cars with Blue Book values less than \$4,000 ensure the competition is more a battle of driver skill than all out power. The VW Golf GTI of Jen and Terry Stonecipher has been a mainstay in this class over the last few years. They return to the twisty stages of Idaho looking to take the fight to more powerful cars.

Side by Side (SxS) utility vehicles have exploded in popularity recently, and the California Rally Series has responded with dedicated classes for turbocharged and normally aspirated SxS vehicles. The tight and twisty Idaho stages are well suited to these short wheelbase vehicles, and it would not be surprising to see them in the front end of the field, especially with an experienced driver behind the wheel such as Stephane Verdier who will be in a Polaris RZR XPT.

The Idaho Rally International takes place June 22-23, and is based in Boise, ID and stages out of Idaho City, ID. The 2019 running of the rally features over 120 miles of smooth, twisty, and flowing stage roads. For more information and a spectator guide visit <http://idahorally.org/>.

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 Series celebrates more than 40 continuous years of performance rally, 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 @californiarallyseries on Instagram.