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Los Angeles – Performance rally returned to Northern California after a nearly thirty year hiatus with the Mendocino Rally on August 6th, 2011. Fourteen teams took the start, competing on over fifty miles of hard packed dirt roads outside of Ukiah, CA. Competitors were delighted with the smooth stages that featured challenging tight and twisty corners.

Former two-time Belgian Rally Champion David Sterckx made his California Rally Series debut at Mendocino. Sterckx teamed up with CRS veteran co-driver Karen Jankowski to compete in the Open four-wheel drive class. The team got off to an impressive start in their Mitsubishi Lancer Evolution, winning the first five stages to build up a formidable lead of almost two minutes. However, a slipping clutch forced their retirement at the start of stage 6, despite the best efforts of their fellow competitors to push the car forward at the uphill start.

After the retirement of Sterckx/Jankowski, the team of Alex Rademacher and Jeanna Yi moved into the lead in their Subaru 2.5 RS. They held on to the lead for the remaining stages and went on to finish in first place. The win marks Rademacher and Yi's first overall victory, and is even more impressive considering the team drove all the way from Reno, NV and back home again in their rally car packed full of spares! Their maximum points finish moves them into the season points lead in the production-based four-wheel drive CRS-GT class. Looking towards the next event, Katianna Pihakari will be fighting to reclaim the championship lead back from Rademacher at the Gorman Ridge Rally on August 27, 2011.

The small-displacement two-wheel drive CRS-2 class was once again the class to watch at Mendocino, with more than two-thirds of the field competing in this popular class. Fighting for the class win were George Doganis and Tom Smith in their Honda Civic versus son and father Tim and Dick Moser in their VW Golf. These two teams were locked in battle at the last event (North Nevada Rally) before the Mosers were forced to retire with a heater core failure and overheating issues. The close racing continued at Mendocino, with the two teams tying on the first stage with the exact same finishing time. Over the first six stages, only seconds separated the two teams, with the advantage going to Doganis/Smith. However, a broken axle on the very last stage forced the Mosers to retire. Doganis/Smith went on to take the class win (and second place overall), which bumps them up into first place in CRS-2. Collecting second place points in CRS-2 were Andrew and Robin Lockhart in their VW Golf, approximately a minute and a half behind Doganis/Smith.

Competition in CRS-2 will see some familiar faces getting back on the stages at the Gorman Ridge Rally. Michel Hoche-Mong and Marie Boyd will be competing in their VW Golf and are

expected to be competitive after their third place overall finish at Gorman last year. Also returning is Chuck Wilson in his Ford Escort, after retiring at North Nevada with mechanical issues. Javier Olivares and Brock Heinz, who currently sit in second place will also be competing at Gorman, hoping to collect enough points to propel them into first.

Jen Imai and Terry Stonecipher were the lone competitors in the two-wheel drive production based Performance Stock ("P-Stock") class at Mendocino. They finished a respectable ninth overall and claimed maximum points helping them extend their class lead. John Black and co-driver Lori Stone are currently sitting in second place in the P-Stock class, and will be looking to put a dent in Imai/Stonecipher's lead at the Gorman Ridge Rally.

After being absent from the last few events, the large-displacement two-wheel drive CRS-5 class will see some action at the Gorman Ridge Rally. Bill Holmes and Sean Gallagher will be competing in their Ford F-150. Despite being only rear wheel drive, Holmes and Gallagher are traditionally the team to watch at Gorman, finishing second overall last year.

Also at the top end of the field at Gorman will be the Subarus of Jon Burke and Doug Chernis with co-driver Craig MacNair. Burke is currently second in the Open four-wheel drive class, and can move into first with a strong finish at Gorman.

The 2011 Mendocino Rally is based in Ukiah, CA and marked a return of rally to Northern California after a nearly thirty year hiatus. The rally featured 54 miles of hard-packed twisty stages contained within the South Cow Mountain off-road vehicle park. For more information on the Mendocino Rally visit http://www.mendocinorally.com .

The 2011 Gorman Ridge Rally is based in Lebec, CA, located just one hour north of the Los Angeles metropolitan area. The rally features 60 miles of hard-packed dirt stages located within the Hungry Valley Off-Road Vehicle park. For more information on the Gorman Ridge Rally visit http://gormanridgerally.com/.

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