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Los Angeles – The second event of the 2012 California Rally Series (CRS) Championship took place on June 9 and 10 at the Idaho Rally, based in Boise, ID. The rally featured ten competitive hard packed dirt and gravel stages in the nearby mountains and forests over two days. Unseasonably cold weather saw snowflakes falling at the higher elevations, a rare occurrenceduring California Rally Series events. The frigid conditions left many teams scrambling for proper tires, as nearly everyone brought hard compounds, expecting a typical summer rally. Consequently many teams started the event with less than ideal equipment.

The hottest competition of the weekend was in the production-based two-wheel drive “Performance Stock” class, which has become a CRS mainstay over the past decades. Taking the victory on the Saturday event were Sarkis Mazmanian and Arin Hovsepain in their Acura Integra. After over an hour of competitive driving, they edged out John Black and Lori Stone in their Ford Ranger by only three minutes. The tables were turned on Sunday though, when Black/Stone fought back to best Mazmanian/Hovsepain by just 40 seconds and claim the class win. The Saturday victory means Mazmanian and Hovsepain hold the P-Stock championship lead going into the next event.

The small-displacement two-wheel drive CRS-2 class is typically one of the more popular classes to watch, and once again represented the largest field in the event. The class started off with an extremely tight battle between Michel Hoche-Mong and the team of Sean Lane and Christian Coulter who nearly matched Hoche-Mong’s pace on the first stage. Lane/Coulter pushed even harder on stage two, but perhaps a little too hard as they went off the road and rolled their Dodge Neon, ending their weekend. Bad luck also befell the next nearest class competitors Chuck Wilson and Brent Ellzey, who also went off the road in their Ford Escort, forcing them to withdraw on Saturday after stage 2. Despite the withdrawal of his class competitors, Hoche-Mong did not cruise to the finish, but continued to push his VW Golf GTI to the limit. He set the fastest two-wheel drive times on every single stage, both Saturday and Sunday. Meanwhile, Wilson/Ellzey were able to rejoin for Sunday’s event, where they took second place in class to Hoche-Mong.

In the production based four-wheel drive CRS-GT class, Alex Rademacher and Jeanne Yi continued their winning streak from the previous event, claiming the class win in their Subaru Impreza on both Saturday and Sunday. Their rally was not without challenges, as an impact with a rock caused a flat tire and severe alignment issues on stage two. The team made repairs in service and were able to continue, making up time over the subsequent stages.

The California Rally Series championship continues July 6-7 with the North Nevada Rally, based in Fernley, NV. The upcoming event features 120 miles of smooth gravel stage with challenging switchbacks. The Friday stages southwest of Lovelock, NV start before sundown, and then competitors run them in reverse direction after dark. Saturday the competitors return to the well-known stages near Gerlach, featuring sandy washes, big jumps and tight, tricky turns. For more information on the North Nevada Rally, visit http://www.northnevadarally.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 Series celebrates more than 35 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 @crspress on twitter.

California Rally Series
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