

Review: Thunderbird 2005

On February 19th and 20th fifty-two cars headed onto the roads between Merritt and Kelowna for the 37th running of the Thunderbird rally. A wide variety of vehicles were represented: everything from the expected 2004 Subaru Sti to a 1994 Plymouth Voyager and a classic 1967 Austin Mini Cooper S. The classes were also well represented: 22 unlimited, 13 calculator, 11 novice, 5 historic and 1 paper.

Friday night registration and tech inspection took place at the Best Western Nicola Inn in Merritt. This was the first WCRA event to enforce the new minimum first-aid kit requirements and competitors were happy to comply. Weather was clear and brisk with all signs pointing to a great weekend for competitors and workers.

Day one offered 460 kilometers of roads and spring conditions including everything from dry and dusty to ice and snow at higher elevations. The transit from Princeton to Osprey Lake claimed the first DNF of the event; the Adrenalin

Rally Golf took an unplanned shortcut and suffered a damaged control arm. Osprey Lake regularity provided the second – and final – DNF of the event when a front spindle failed on Dennis Gunn's and Brian Hackney's Audi 4000 Quattro. After the final snow-covered stages through Big White and McCulloch teams retired to the Ramada Inn in Kelowna.

Day two driver's meeting started with the announcement that a repeat run through Big White had been cancelled due to 'road-racing' being reported to the local police – something Kelowna RCMP take very seriously. Paul Westwick and Ken Kwong looked after public relations but competitors were reminded of the importance of being aware of the sports public image.

275 kilometers of roads took competitors from Kelowna back to Merritt through more snow and more offs than day one. A thin layer of snow over frozen ruts kept competitors (and checkpoint crews) on their toes. Quick

rescue by two separate sweep vehicles ensured that there were no more DNFs to report.

The route finished back in Merritt at the Best Western. Prompt scoring showed that the team of Glenn Wallace and Miller Dumaoal finished first overall with only 11 points. Dan and Stuart Fealk claimed first in calculator with 37 points while Larry Lebel and Marcel Chichack took historic with 92 points. Jayme and Ava Franklin led novice with 189 points while Allan Brown and Howard Siemens won paper with 819 points.

Thunderbird 2005 was another superb WCRA event, with rallymaster Paul Westwick laying out the route, a dedicated group of volunteers staying one step ahead of competitors and a fierce group of competitors to bring it all to life. Be sure to check out rallybc.com for event details and photos, and join us at Thunderbird 2006!

By Richard Lynch

Review: Barnes Lake Rallycross 2005

The 2005 edition of the WCRA Rally X on Ice was a huge success! Unlike the 2004 edition where the ice was melting and puddles were forming all along the track, this year's event was pure ice all day.

Although entry numbers were down a bit from the previous year, this year's ice-x still brought out some great competition and times were being swapped in all the categories from run to run.

The 4 classes were 2wd studded (1 entrant), 2wd rubber (6 entrants), 4wd studded (5 entrants), and 4wd rubber (7 entrants). Between the classes there were 19 total entrants, with two of them,

Pemberton's Norm LeBlanc in his 2002 Subaru WRX, and Oregon's Bill Price in his 1984 Audi Quattro pulling double duty and switching tires between classes to both run 4wd studded and rubber.

Times were scored for a total of all four runs around the frozen Barnes Lake in Ashcroft BC. A lot of the classes came down to the final run to determine the winners, and some great battles ensued.

The results in both 4wd classes came down to a first place battle between Norm LeBlanc and Bill Price, in both of which Norm was able to squeeze out the wins. In 2wd rubber Jared Powell-Williams in his early 1980's VW GTI was able to secure a victory in his class. And in 2wd studded, Paul



Westwick in his classic 1970 Saab 96 finished both first and last in his class, as no one dared to take on the speedy blue beast.

Full results and some excellent photos can be found at www.RallyBC.com under the "Rally Cross" heading.

By Shawn Edstrom