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Rocky Mountain Rally - Thomson Victorious!!

With another consistent and well-driven rally, Ontario's Peter Thomson, with co-driver Rod Hendricksen of Clinton, N.J., won the 32nd annual Rocky Mountain Rally in Calgary, Alberta. Their Subaru WRX built up a 2:37 minute margin over Maine competitors, John Cassidy and Dave Getchell. This was a sweet victory for the amiable Thomson, as they crashed out of last year's event.



Friday's stages took National competitors west to Powderface Trail, in Kananaskis country. The two early leaders - tied at the beginning of the third stage - were favourites Antoine L'Estage and co-driver Yanick Napert in a Hyundai Tiburon, and Norm LeBlanc and Keith Morison in their Subaru Impreza WRX. Both teams, however, were soon out of the running within two kilometers of each other due to accidents.

Taking third place overall was another Quebec team, last year's Group 2 winner, Jon Nichols, with Carl Schenk co-driving. Nichols and the previous three time winner of the CARS National Group 2 Championship, Gord Olsen and Todd Patola, have conducted a gentlemanly, but very competitive battle since Nichols rejoined the Canadian rally series three years ago.

When Nichols' car broke their steering hub during Friday's action on Powderface, it was Olsen who supplied garage space and equipment in his shop, two hours east of Calgary.

This time the battle went down to the 14th and final stage of the two day event. Olsen held a 13 second margin over Nichols entering the last stage. At the end of the stage it was Nichols' victory with a two second margin, 1:49.34 to 1:49.36. It proved to be an outstanding battle for the competitors and the over 300 spectators who traveled in to the Porcupine Hills area, west of Claresholm.

Taking first overall in the regional competition, consisting of slightly fewer stage miles, was the Vancouver team of Scott Trinder and Bill Westhead, in Trinder's recently imported right-hand drive Subaru WRX RA. They built up a margin of 1:54 over Olsen, who finished second.

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Third place in the regional competition was Toronto's Robert Jekosz, with Calgary's 'co-driver for hire' Tomasz Karzynski. Jekosz finished a very respectable sixth in the National competition to also win the top novice competition in the two day rally. Jekosz also had to cope with car problems as the team burned out the center differential of the four-wheel drive car, and drove most of Saturday with only two wheel drive.

The National Championship now heads back east for Round Three and the Rallye Baie de Chaleurs in Quebec, where Peter Thomson will try and maintain his healthy points lead.

Posted by Warwick Patterson at June 17, 2005 03:03 AM

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