



Attention News, Sports and Automotive Editors

For Immediate Release

NOTE local interest for: Laval, Montreal, Ste-Jean-sur-Richelieu, New Richmond, Ottawa, Squamish, Toronto, Thornhill, Lachine, Montreal

BRUNO CARRÉ TAKES FIRST NATIONAL WIN AT RALLY PERCE NEIGE

Maniwaki (Quebec), Feb. 7, 2010.- Icy conditions and mechanical issues took their toll on the field of 54 entrants at the 2010 Rallye Perce Neige on Saturday. Only 36 cars made it to the finish of the first round of the 2010 Canadian Rally Championship, presented by Subaru and supported by Yokohama.

Calculated and cautious driving by Bruno Carré (Laval, QC) and co-driver Yvan Joyal brought the pair their first National Championship win. "You couldn't push too hard because you would get caught somewhere" said a happy Carré at the finish, "The snowbanks were very small and you couldn't lean on them."

Without special tractionized ice tires, Mathieu L'Estage (St-Jean-sur-Richelieu, QC) and Yanick Napert were hoping just to stay on the road. A cautious approach and skilful drive landed them second place, the highest overall finish of their career. "I think Bruno and I are the two guys who never went off the road today, so that was the key to doing well here," said L'Estage, "It's a good start for the season, so now we'll try and get the car ready for Rocky Mountain Rally."

Rounding out the podium, Craig Henderson (St-Constant, QC) and Co-Driver Lyne Murphy had resigned themselves to a mid-pack finish after getting stuck in a snowbank, then stopping to help pull Antoine L'Estage back on the road later in the day. The good karma must have paid off, because the duo found themselves in third place at the finish.

Defending champions Patrick Richard (Squamish, BC) and Co-Driver, Alan Ockwell (Toronto, ON) of the Subaru Rally Team Canada were struck with bad luck early in the event. The pair left the first stage on a corner that later claimed several cars, but they were able to get back on the road after losing only two minutes. In their push to reclaim the lost time they posted a string of stage wins before retiring from the rally early with a mechanical problem.

Their main rivals, Antoine L'Estage and Nathalie Richard (Ste-Jean-Sur-Richelieu, QC) looked set to repeat last year's win until they also suffered a series of setbacks. A two-minute lead was dashed when they spun into a snowbank on the treacherous Kitigan Zibi stage. Mechanical problems followed and led to a small fire that thwarted their comeback fight on the penultimate stage. They finished out of the points in sixteenth position.

With the attrition at the front of the rally, Leo Urlichich (Thornhill, ON) and Co-Driver Martin Headland, who are always contenders for the podium, led the rally for three stages also went off the road. While the incident only caused light damage to their car, the team took too much time in the ditch and finished in 13th place.

With Urlichich and other competition by the wayside, defending North American Rally Cup Champion Andrew Comrie-Picard (Toronto, ON) and Jeremy Wimpey drove flat out to try and reel in Bruno Carré for the win. Their charge ended when they slid off on the road on the challenging final stage. The team got back on the road, finishing the rally in 12th place.

With an impressive drive in a two-wheel drive car, Jon Nichols and Carl Shenk (Lachine, Quebec) beat a lot of high-powered all wheel drive cars to a sixth place overall finish. The series veterans hadn't competed in a two-wheel drive car since 2006, but drove hard to make up for the lack of traction, finishing nearly six minutes ahead of their closest two-wheel drive competition.

The championship battle will resume at the Rocky Mountain Rally near Calgary, Alberta in May. New faces on top of the championship standings should bring a lot of teams out west for the second round of the championship.

The Canadian Rally Championship is comprised of six events held nationwide in a season that extends from February to November. The series is presented by Subaru Canada, supported by Yokohama Tire Canada and features contingency programs from Subaru Canada and Mitsubishi Canada. The Canadian Association of Rallysport (CARS) is the official sanctioning body for rallying in Canada.

Rally car racing is often described simply as “real cars, real roads, real fast.” The all-season motorsport sees drivers and their co-drivers take modified road cars to the limit as they achieve blistering speeds over closed-road courses that typically cover more than 150 kilometers of gravel, dirt or snow-covered roads. Fans can get up close to the cars in the service areas and catch all the action from specially designated spectator points located at the best spots on the route.

Full coverage of the championship will air on RDS and TSN. Check local listings. For more information: www.carsrally.ca or www.rallyeperceneige.com

Photo Credit: Andrew Harvey Photography

Rallye Perce Neige Final Results

1. Bruno Carré - Yvan Joyal – 2 hours 26 minutes 17 seconds
2. Mathieu L'Estage - Yanick Napert – 2:29:39
3. Craig Henderson – Lyne Murphy – 2:36:41
4. Mathieu Dubé – Eric Losier – 2:37:57
5. Marc Bourassa – Daniel Paquette – 2:38:12
6. Jon Nichols – Carl Shenk – 2:39:26
7. Steeve Hobbs – J-Mathieu Tremblay – 2:39:29
8. Erik Gaudet – Pascal Longpré – 2:43:47
9. Ugo Desgreniers – Erik Kirby – 2:44:04
10. Simon Dubé – Pat Lavigne – 2:45:25

FOR MORE INFORMATION:

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