

RACV 500 - VICTORIA

MOE, NOVEMBER 17 — IT WAS DATSUNS ONE, TWO in the RACV 500, the last heat of the 1974 Victorian Rally Championship and Victoria's first European style special stage rally, when it finished here late this afternoon.

George Fury and Monty Suffern, in a works Datsun 710, started car one on the road and kept it that way to finish a massive 6 minutes 4 seconds ahead of the second car. With penalties set at one point per second Fury stacked up a points loss of 656, equivalent to a time loss of 10 minutes 56 seconds.

Apart from the Datsun's 6 minute lead most cars were only seconds apart.

The car was the one used by Harry Kallstrom and Roger Bonhomme in the recent Southern Cross but which retired on the second night.

Consequently little preparation was required for the RACV 500.

REAR BIAS

In fact the braking system was still set up for the Swedish driver with a bias towards the rear brakes so that rear wheel lock-up can be easily induced to cater for the European cornering technique. The set-up didn't really suit Fury and it resulted in many spectators and control officials getting spectacular views of him taming his potent mount.

It was Fury/Suffern's first time ever as first cab off the rank but they seemed well able to put in a first class performance without a hare to chase.

John Armitage and Jeff Beaumont brought their Autosport Datsun 180B SSS into second spot on 1020 points (17 minutes 0 seconds). The car nearly didn't make the start line. The task of refitting the original motor to replace the works unit that died in the Goldfields Rally wasn't finished until a few hours before the off.

WEIGHT

With the extra weight that has been added to the car during its development the standard motor gave it a less favorable power to weight ratio.

Armitage found that the only way to set quick times was to keep the car moving at a constant high speed rather than using the somewhat safer technique of slow in, fast out.

If Fury was hailed as the fastest driver through the spectator points, Armitage gave the crowds a real treat of extrovert driving in his earnest pursuit of success.

Third, down 1024 points just 4 seconds outside second place, were Bob Bird and Warwick Smith in the ex-HDT Torana XU1.

Fourth with a loss of 1088 points were Ted Anderson and Tony Wunderlich in their much modded Datsun 1000. The points loss is equivalent to a time loss of 18 minutes 8 seconds.

UNSPONSORED

As usual the car, which is unsponsored and is maintained by Anderson, had a trouble-free run. All the service crew had to

STORY: COLIN WOOD

do was adjust the brakes and top up with a pint of Coarse Plus at the stage break and clean the windscreen five times.

Datsun man Bruce Wilson with Mike Prendergast in the hot seat calling the turns was fifth with a loss of 1205 points (20 minutes 5 seconds) in his newly respayed Datsun 1600.

An uncertainty by Prendergast and consequent re-tracing of steps lost the crew the four minute maximum on one stage taking a higher placing from their grasp.

Gary Harrowfield and Geoff Boyd, who have already won the Victorian Rally Championship for 1974, brought home their Schweppes Cortina 2000 in sixth place after losing 1258 points (20 minutes 58 seconds).

Despite spirited driving the standard power unit proved slightly underpowered for the long straights which made up much of the route.

UNRETIRED

Mal McPherson brought his Renault R12 Gordini out of six month's retirement to run with Auto Action's Bob Watson doing the turn calling.

Bob Watson has long been an advocate of this type of event, which in particular gives the owner/driver a decent run for his hard earned money. Of course he was suitably impressed as you can read in his column elsewhere in this issue.

Watson drove the last few sections as McPherson insisted that Bob could not be enjoying the ride as a navigator.

In fact he was!

Tony Roberts and Jim McAuliffe were going like a train until they deranged the front end of their Saab. A tape recorder carried in the car provided light relief when played back at the finish! Such language!

SEIZED

Local crew Norm Wagner and Gael McLean in their Holden Kingswood had their run abruptly curtailed when the motor seized going through a ford.

Wayne Muldoon and Paul Patterson put the fan through the radiator of their Datsun 1600

GENTLE FURY'S RACV 500



TOP: GEORGE FURY COPEd WELL with the Datsun which was set up for oversteer by Harry Kallstrom in the 'Cross. Geoff Salton photograph.

ABOVE: JOHN ARMITAGE FINALLY TOOK second place in the Autosport SSS despite having a near standard engine. Jeff Beaumont looked after his route chart. Canon FTB photograph.

going through the same ford, which halted many crews' progress temporarily.

Despite the relative smoothness of the roads the Datsun 1600 of McKay/Peasley had to retire due to a succession of bent rims.

When the rain started falling after the stage break roads were turned from fast and dusty to tractionless slicks.

Times lengthened as drivers adjusted to the conditions. After recently rebuilding parts of their Galant Ross Turner and Ian Pearson decided that discretion was definitely the better part of valor, especially after they nudged another tree.

INTERESTING

The timing system was particularly interesting. In theory the times set for special stages should have been just cleanable by the average championship level competitor. Crews lost one point for each second late up to a maximum of 240, or four minutes.

Time taken over four minutes did not incur any points loss but was taken out of late running time.

THIS BOG ON THE early stages caught out many competitors as well as the organisers. Geoff Salton photograph.

Spectators the organisers wanted and spectators there were.

About 5000 people turned up to see the cars at 10 spectator points. Auto Action's Roger Bonhomme was on hand with a loud hailer to give a running commentary as the cars went through.

Information was fed to him via the two-way radio set up which also served to keep the St. John Ambulance on call, advise on road conditions and times being set by the leading competitors as well as assisting in the setting up of controls.

SHARPENING

As would be expected there are a few things that need sharpening up for next year. Spectators weren't allowed to the Flynn's Creek Tree Farm stage break. What excitement there would have been with cars coming straight off a special stage to their service crews surrounded by spectators!

When gaps appeared in the field control officials still would not let cars out early which meant that spectators were waiting around with nothing to watch.

Probably the biggest fault was the fact that results were not available at the finish. As far as spectators go a rally has no beginning and no end. It just seems like a lot of cars thrashing round the bush.

In fact scores were difficult to get at all and were not available until the Thursday following the event.

One of the more unfortunate aspects of the event was the inclusion of three boggy

BRILLIANT WAS THE ONLY WAY to describe Ted Anderson's performance in the little 1200 engined Datsun 1000. Tony Wunderlich was his navigator as usual. Canon FTB photograph.

PROVISIONAL RESULTS

1. Fury/Suffern	Datsun	656 pts (10 min. 56 sec.)
2. Armitage/Beaumont	Datsun	1020 pts (17 min. 00 sec.)
3. Bird/Smith	Torana	1024 pts (17 min. 04 sec.)
4. Anderson/Wunderlich	Datsun	1088 pts (18 min. 08 sec.)
5. Wilson/Prendergast	Datsun	1205 pts (20 min. 05 sec.)
6. Harrowfield/Boyd	Cortina	1258 pts (20 min. 58 sec.)

stretches. The first of these held some competitors up for over an hour before a tractor arrived to extricate the unfortunate.

BOG

A later bog caught some while others were able to take a wet side track to get through.

Where sections are timed to the second it is quite unfair and unnecessary to include such obstacles.

What must be said is that the RACV 500 was a very brave step in the right direction. The organisation, while it suffered from minor but irritating

faults, was comprehensive. Such was the enormity of the task undertaken that it would have been practically impossible for no fault to be found.

The director, Barrie Edmonds, and his band of helpers can take a bow.

Competitors, officials, service crews and spectators are invited to the presentations which will be made at a barbecue on December 1 at 38 Challenger St. Diamond Creek.

It starts at noon, the presentations will be made at 3.00 p.m. and the ABC's 26 minute color film will be shown.



"OUR MAN" COLIN WOOD does like having a go as often as possible. Here he gives the

MAL McPHERSON AND BOB WATSON eventually shared the