

RALLY REPORT

Smith/Paterson clinch Vic. Champ

WARWICK SMITH and Paul Paterson in their Rallyquip Lancer won the Autosport Stages Rally on Saturday 27th September.

Theirs was a very consistent drive, borne out by the fact that they failed to take outright honors on even one of the fourteen Special Stages.

Trouble plagued all the pre-event favorites, enabling Smith/Paterson, who surprisingly led after the daylight division, to plug away keeping the car on the road and in one piece.

It is a great sporting achievement for this determined pair to win the State Title for the third consecutive year. It is very hard to win a State event, let alone the title, but to do it three times seems impossible. They richly deserve their success, which stems from pure dedication.

Second outright went to the hard charging Piranha Ignitions, Rex Muldoon and Noel Kelly in their Datsun 1600. Rex, who was one of the many sponsors to support the event, benefited from his own support. It was his best performance for some time, coming hard after a very disappointing run in the Amateur 100. He was never far off the leaders, being fourth after the daylight division.

Report from John White

Third placing and first Grade Two crew went to Chris Wall and Lloyd Minifie in their Datsun 1600. They have been threatening to post a good result lately, but have been without lady luck.

Fourth, and a welcome return to rallying, went to Top Gear's Ian Swan in his Datsun 1600. He had Derek Rawson calling the instructions, and immediately after the event they were thought to be equal third but a four second addition error was found. Swannie would have to be extremely pleased with this performance as his reliability record prior to his lay-off was none too pleasing.

Fifth position and second in Grade Two, due to his navigator's grading, was Steve Ashton and David McKenzie in the newly built, Les Collins' prepared, Datsun 1600. Steve was really on fire early, taking outright honors on the first Special Stage.

Attracting 78 entries is support of just how good a job was done in pre-event publicity. Amongst the entries were rarely seen crews in today's State Events. The added attraction of Ed Ordynski, from South Australia, surely helped attract the thousands of spectators who literally blocked the roads to the spectator points, especially the first at night, although they had the help of two fully laden log trucks who wanted a part of the action.

The only disappointment was the failure of Sydney's Ian Hill to front, especially after his fine performance in that State's Championship event the week prior. It was a cumulation of minor problems from this event that caused his withdrawal.

Crews were sent off from the start at one minute intervals on a transport to the Gladysdale area, just west of Powelltown.

The daylight division consisted of 8 Special Stages with a total length of 62 kilometres competitive.

All servicing and the Division break was held at the Recreation Reserve in Powelltown where the local football club had an extensive catering service set up. Progressive scores were being tallied in the pavilion and a very extensive radio link was being directed by the Omega UHF Radio Club.

The weather conditions both prior to the event, except for heavy rain on the Thursday night, and during the event were excellent.

The first two Special Stages were North of the Little Yarra Road, the first being 11.30 km, using Portas and Britannia Creek Roads. Steve Ashton was quickest, dropping 113 seconds to both Muldoon and the Brown brothers 114, Ordynski 115, Wall/West and Portman/Rainer 122 and Watson/Hodge 123.

Bell and O'Reilly immediately struck trouble hitting a hole and breaking a tie-rod ruining their chances of victory. The Clubman Champions, Billings and Ellis, hit the same hole, puncturing and breaking a wheel.

The Second Stage was 3.56 km down Buffer Break Road, a rarely used tight and narrow road on the edge of the forest. Ordynski, who was having a ball, turned it on to drop 67 from Portman and Muldoon both down 70. Following these were the Browns 73, Smith, Bell and Watson all on 75 with Harrowfield and Ashton on 77. The only casualty on this Stage was the Broken Hill crew of Collins/O'Fee who speared off on a greasy cautioned corner.

The next two stages took competitors through the two main daylight spectator points and were both south of Little Yarra Road. The third stage was 8.10 km of Beenak and Torbets Roads to Gilderoy Road. Portman was getting everything together taking outright honors down 156 from Smith really chasing the Championship down 159. Next was Brown and Muldoon on 163, Watson 165, Waterhouse 166 and Davis 169.

Ordynski turned up a wrong road dropping an extra 300 seconds, ending his outright chances. Costly this was, as he certainly would have finished in the top three apart from the error.

The fourth Stage was Torbets Road to Learmonth Creek and were both taking crews past the main spectator area, which was manned with a PA system to keep spectators advised. The PA operators had a radio link with the Stage start, half a kilometre away.

This location turned out to be superb spectator value, with all and sundry witnessing two roll-overs, they being Billings/Ellis and Lee/Thompson, the latter being very spectacular. Bell was back with a vengeance down only 81 to Portman 83,

Smith 85, Watson 86, Officer 88 and Waterhouse 89. Bird/Allen retired the Denton Autos Datsun 1600 with a blown clutch whilst Melbourne/Cullis quit with a blown headgasket.

A thirty minute service on the oval followed before two more Stages on the Northern side. The first of these was 8.63 km up Monetts, Fitzpatricks and Black Sands Roads. Monetts Road was rather slippery which kept crews on their toes. Portman was back on top, down only 125 to Bell, Watson and Brown all on 128 followed by Smith 134, Ordynski 140, Blandford 143 and Officer 144.

6.76 km followed taking crews back to the main road by way of Fitzpatricks and Mackeys Roads. It was fast downhill stuff with only a THL and a hard left corner to negotiate. Portman pipped Bell by a second dropping 73 to 74 followed by Brown 76, Watson 83, Muldoon 84, Ordynski 87, Smith and Wall 90 and Swan 91. Bruce Robertson found the left hander too much, going well off which eventually caused his retirement.

Next up was 18.05 km south of the main road using Turners, Learmonth Creek, Upper



ABOVE: The victorious pairing of Warwick Smith and Paul Paterson head for their third successive Victorian title in the Rallyquip Lancer. Photo by Eagle Photographics.

Bunyip and Golderoy Roads, which took crews back to the start of the main spectator Stage. This was by far the longest daylight Stage and where the leading contenders were expected to gain a valuable break prior to the night division. Bell was alight dropping 246 to Smith who was also flying on 254 from Watson 268, Muldoon 272, Brown 276 with Ordynski and Blandford 282.

Portman ended a superb run when the big Datsun 200B ran out of oil pressure. It was disappointing for the Autosport crew, who were really trying to pick up the bosses' money.

A repeat of the fourth Stage was the Final Division One Stage. This time, Watson was fastest on 87, a second slower than first time through and six down on Bell's previous. Following Watson was Muldoon 88, Bell 89, Smith 91, Blandford 94 and the Birrell brothers 95.

The Forestry Commission

had quite a few officers observing the event and trying to get on to the course. A report was submitted and the outcome augers well for the event to run daylight in the same area in the future.

Top placings after Division one were as follows: 1. W. Smith/P. Paterson (Lancer) 1005; 2. R. Watson/D. Hodge (Peugeot) 1015; 3. C. Brown/S. Brown (Datsun 100B) 1018; 4. R. Muldoon/N. Kelly (Datsun 1600) 1020; 5. S. Blandford/R. Harper (Datsun 1600) 1086; 6. D. Officer/K. Hobson (Galant) 1110; 7. R. Waterhouse/A. Walsham (Datsun 1600) 1123; 8. G. Davis/O. Long (Datsun 180B) 1128.

The night division Stages were generally much longer, although the shortest Stage was a mere 2.15 km. The division went in a long loop from Powelltown to Noojee, Tanjil Bren, Fumina, Neerim and back to Powelltown. 120 km competitive in six stages.

The first of these was 40 km up Big Creek Road and down McCartheys Spur Road. Unfortunately, Big Creek Road had suffered two major road repairs, due to the road falling

LEFT: Rex Muldoon and Noel Kelly again looked set for a strong finish but retired. Photo by Eagle Photographics.

away. Crews transported through one of these in daylight without warning and then both were cautioned at night. Some crews became bogged when they tried to take inside lines rather than keep in the centre of the roadway.

One of these being the Brown brothers, which proved to be a costly mistake, costing them a certain victory in the Championship, a victory they richly deserve. There is a chance that they may lodge a protest to try and have the Stage deleted.

Fastest on the Stage went to Bell who was really flying. He dropped 235 to Wall 277, Smith 302, Ordynski 309, Swan 340, Muldoon 343 and Officer 370. Marsh ended his fine run by going off in a big way heading down McCartheys Spur Road.

A service in Noojee followed prior to 30.13 km up Loch Valley and Toorong Road then down Tanjil Link Road. Bell was still alight, easily taking fastest down 382 from Brown 438, Muldoon 439, Wall 453, Ordynski 460, Smith 469 and Swan 475.

8.48 Km followed a 22 km transport down through Vesper Junction. The Stage followed Duggan and Fergusons Roads.

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This time Brown was fastest down 204 from Muldoon 221, Smith 226, Mitchell 233, Waterhouse 236, Swan 238, and Grealy 258. Bell punctured to drop 327 and Peter Evans retired his Datsun 1600 with a broken ball joint whilst the Fitchers pulled out with electrical problems. Watson also was having major problems with the car persisting in throwing fan belts.

The fourth night Stage was a demanding 18.25 km along Kings and Latrobe River Roads. Brown was again fastest down 233 from Smith 239, Bell 243, Swan 252 Ordynski 260, Toner 263, Ashton 270 and Waterhouse 271. Watson retired the Peugeot with the fan belt problem.

Next up was the short, twisty 2.15 km littered with spectators and flashlights. It was an eerie sight watching the cars for over

a kilometre wind down then up the valley through farmland with all the lights flashing. Bell was fastest down 7 seconds from Brown 9, Smith and Muldoon 11, Turner 12, and Davis Ashton and Dunn on 13.

The final Stage was 21.30 km back to Powelltown after a final service. The Stage took crews up Ada River Road, through another packed spectator point onto Dowey Spur then Big Creek roads for a very fast run home. Bell was again flying down 151 from Brown 170, Smith and Blandford 190, Ordynski 194, Muldoon 198, Wall 205 and Swan and Mitchell both on 206.

With the action over, crews and spectators assembled in the football pavilion where the locals had the bar operating. Martini had also supplied wine for an informal presentation.

The event turned out to be an

enormous success and, with the same team in charge of next year's two day daylight affair, all really looks good for a boomer. The presentation night is to be held on Thursday 16th October at the Top of the Town re-

ception rooms in Doncaster Shopping Town commencing at 7 pm. The night will be in the form of a Disco, supper will be provided and a small charge of \$3.00 per head will be made to cover the supper.

OUTRIGHT PLACINGS

1. W. Smith/P. Paterson	Lancer	2442
2. R. Muldoon/N. Kelly	Datsun 1600	2531
3. C. Wall/L. Minifie	Datsun 1600	2670
4. I. Swan/D. Rawson	Datsun 1600	2674
5. S. Ashton/D. McKenzie	Datsun 1600	2833
6. M. Dunn/P. Godson	Datsun 1600	2897
7. G. Harrowfield/I. Ellis	Datsun 1600	2904
8. E. Ordynski/P. Gubbins	Mazda RX2	2973
9. P. Eather/S. Yorke	Datsun 1600	2991
10. B. Brookes/A. White	Datsun 180B	3017

CHAMPIONSHIP POINTS

DRIVER		NAVIGATOR	
W. Smith	32	P. Paterson	32
C. Brown	28	S. Brown	28
G. Portman	18	P. Rainer	18
S. Blandford	12	R. Harper	12
J. Uttleymoore	12	R. Scorr	12
H. Bell	9	A. Allen	9