

Tests of a trial

GETTING bogged when you're late in a trial is a very tense business.

So it's easy to understand why the navigator lost the wheel nuts in the mud when changing from ordinary to mud tyres to extricate the car.

A frantic search followed and the missing wheel nuts were found — sticking to the sole of the navigator's boot.

Not that there was much mud on last week's 2000 mile BP Rally but there was enough in places to make the going very sticky.

A Cortina GT crewed by Melbourne competitors Bruce Woodful and Bob Forsyth won the five-day event outright (provisional) from the Holden X2 of Tony Roberts and Peter Haas by two points.

The organisation by the Light Car Club of Australia ran smoothly until the afternoon of the second last day when the crews had been driving for nearly 36 hours.

controls were set

up at the wrong points and the points lost by competitors on these were rightly deleted.

Of the field of 37 starters, 26 rolled into Chadstone on Sunday, dirty, with many showing the scars of short excursions off the road in forests in Victoria and NSW.

The sticky patch occurred near Wilby in Northern Victoria on the rally's assembly stage as the competitors starting from Adelaide, Sydney and Melbourne joined a common route to Albury for the start of the rally proper.

Many were caught without their mud equipment believing that the assembly stage would be relatively easy.

From Albury the cars travelled east into forests near Tallangatta where slippery clay roads and thick mist hampered driving.

At Albury, a South Australian entered VW1300 led the field with the eventual winners then lying second, Klas Peters and Geoff Sproat third in a VW 1200 and Rex. Lunn

and N. Price fourth in a Cortina GT.

A head-on crash between Lunn and Peters in a slippery forest caused Lunn's retirement and Peters' the loss of many points.

Conditions then varied from dust and rocks to snow and mud for the rest of the rally through Canberra, Wagga Wagga, Jerilderie, Wangaratta, Hotham Heights, Bairnsdale and through Gippsland to Melbourne.

The lead changed four times, three of them in the last days as cars retired or became lost.

At Canberra, competitors agreed that the rally had been as hard so far as the previous two BP rallies put together.

By Canberra, with hard and stony roads behind them after the forests, S. Locke and J. Locke in the VW 1300 were still first with the Woodful-Forsyth car second.

Gerry Crown and M. Collier were third in a Renault Gordini and Tony Theiler and Garry Chapman fourth in a Falcon.

In the run to Wagga Wagga, roads were generally dry and the order behind the leaders changed when Gerry Crown left the road to avoid a truck and retired.

At Wagga Wagga, the evening meal stop on the third day, seven cars had retired.

On chiefly dry roads, the rally wound across southern NSW to Jerilderie and then back into

boggy areas in northern Victoria to Wangaratta for breakfast.

Early on the fourth morning, several difficult navigation sections cost cars points near Killawarra and again at Woolshed, both within 25 miles of Wangaratta.

At Woolshed, the leaders, McLeod and Locke, entered control from the wrong direction and Woodful - Forsyth lost time finding the control.

When the field left Wangaratta for the trip over Mt. Hotham, Tony Theiler and Garry Chapman led from Tony Roberts and Peter Haas in a Holden X2 with Woodful-Forsyth third and Ray Christie and Joe Dunlop fourth in a VW1600TS.

The Bairnsdale to Melbourne section saw Tony Theiler and Bob Watson crash, Tony Roberts-Peter Haas lose time in a forest north of Morwell, and Bruce Woodful and Bob Forsyth emerge the winners.

Class A. — Up to 1100 cc.: K. Lott and C. Davis, Anglia (1st), N. Beckman and P. Davidson, Renault R8 (2nd), and H. Chivas and R. Denny, Austin Healey Sprite (3rd).

Class B. — 1101 to 1500 cc.: B. Woodful and R. Forsyth, Cortina GT (1st), H. Firth and A. Denham, Cortina GT (2nd), and S. McLeod and J. Locke, VW1300 (3rd).

Class C. — 1501 to 2000 cc.: R. Christie and J. Dunlop, VW1600TS (1st), G. Russell and M. Hartigan, Peugeot 404 (2nd), and J. Murray and D. Johnson, Prince 200 GT (3rd).

Class D. — 2000 cc. and above: A. Roberts and P. Haas, Holden X2 (1st), J. Ellis and P. Guymer, Falcon (2nd), and R. Lunn and G. Thomas, Holden X2 (3rd).