


Rally Team

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Seed 9 RallySprint – First Overall Victory for MozartRacing Team

Seed 9 RallySprint is typically the first event of the season for Westcoast rallyists, a short one-day event with 3 repeated stages for a total of 47 stage miles. As it is a short event and one specially suited for beginners, the organizers opted to run the event without stage notes. As such drivers needed to take judgment based on what they see, not particularly easy on some of the really fast sections.

Seed 9 was held on March 7th, 2006 and was headquartered in Jean, NV just outside of Las Vegas. With 18 cars at the start, the rally sprint achieved great attendance and support from local rallyists. Having the highest speedfactor the MozartRacing team was scheduled to start as the first car, a first for the team. Another first for the team was a new co-driver, Piers O'Hanlon, a successful driver and navigator in the California Rally Series, joined Wolfgang Hoeck on the "hot seat" and plans to stay with the team throughout the 2006 season. "I am looking forward to teaming up with Wolfgang for the 2006 US Rally Championship. With Wolfie's extensive driving experience, Piers' valuable co-driving experience during the 2004 and 2005 seasons, a competitive car and enthusiastic and dedicated crew, the team should prove to be worthy competitors." said Piers. Scott Tell from Clean Racing again provided the rally service and as always handed over a perfectly clean and well-maintained rally vehicle.

The rally got off to a slow start initially with the teams having to wait until the first stage was cleared from some errand quad drivers who got a little too close to the stage. That was certainly a good thing as the rally cars ended up reaching speeds up to 130 miles per hour on some stretches on the first 2 stages. The beginning stages being mostly tarmac provided excellent grip and gave drivers confidence to push hard. At the end the top 3 drivers (Hoeck, Chernis, Dowell) were separated by only a few seconds after 2 stages, a great battle.



Stage 3 headed back in the opposite direction passing the service area on to the first gravel section, a 1.98 miles short sprint and a turn-around stage followed by the longest stage of the rally, 7.75 miles. The long stage proved to be a stage where the MozartRacing team could pull somewhat away from the competition, putting about 15 seconds on the next team. The following short 3 miler, however, almost provided disaster for MozartRacing as they picked up a full flat tire on the last mile of the stage. The team opted to finish first and then changed the tire, which was completely ripped open on the inside.

The return of the 3-mile stage had to be shortened, as the time controls couldn't be setup quickly enough. As such, the rally got later into the afternoon as planned and the organizers decided to cancel the following 7 miler, the teams did not have any extra lights mounted. This was a good call from the organizers, as it got really dusky by the time the teams reached the service. There all the teams added pod lights to their cars to be fully equipped for the last 2 night stages.

Even though being the first car out in every stage was challenging due to the rolling gravel atop the stages, on the last 2 stages it turned into a definite advantage for the MozartRacing Team. As the sun set, the wind stopped and dust started to become a real factor. In the second to last stage the MozartRacing team pulled 30 seconds away from the next car, in part probably due to having no dust problem at all. The organizer allowed a larger dust window in the return stage, the final of the rally, but it didn't help the competitors as MozartRacing extended the gap and finished in the end 1.5 minutes ahead of the field. "Being in the lead is certainly nerve-wrecking especially on the last stage. I almost threw it away as I got to a taped-up intersection, which I saw too late. Fortunately as I corrected the car and drifted over a grassy section it was nice and clear. The rest of the stage was a little erratic, as sometimes I couldn't find the next gear and as I decided not to keep the pedal to the floor in the last really fast section. I figured the cushion would be enough and there's no point risking anything. We are delighted with a first overall victory!" said driver Wolfgang Hoeck.

The rally finished later that evening with a ceremony in the classic Pioneer Saloon in Goodsprings. Here's a link to the overall rally results: <http://www.MozartRacing.com/Results/OverallResults.html>

Links:

MozartRacing Home Page: <http://www.MozartRacing.com>

Seed 9 Home Page: <http://www.lvrscca.org/rallyx/2006/seed9.htm>

Rally America Home Page: <http://www.rally-america.com/>

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