

DAWNBUSTER IV

MARCH 15-16, 1997

by Bryan Murphy



Dawnbuster IV, the second round of the Detroit Region SCCA Road Rally Championship series, ran from dusk-to-dawn on March 15 and 16. Following a Thursday night ice storm, nine rally teams braved the elements to test their skills on the mix of clear pavement and patchy-iced gravel roads.

The course covered over three hundred miles of rural roads in the southeastern Michigan counties of Ingham, Jackson, Livingston, Oakland, and Washtenaw. The icy conditions on the gravel had kept the Equipped and Limited teams chasing factors all night long. Meanwhile, Stock teams struggled to keep leg scores under 100 points with plenty of wheel slip on legs up to 30 miles in length. Novice teams had their hands full keeping their cars on the road, and appeared to follow the course well, managing to avoid maxing too many controls. The rally was broken up into three sections of approximately one hundred miles apiece.

At the first break, the three lead cars were separated by 2 points! The Equipped teams of Gene Henderson / Rob Moran, Mark Henderson / John Puffenberger and

the Limited team of Jim Fekete / Jim Shaffer had 22, 23, and 24 points, respectively. In Stock class, Jeff Wernberg / Brian Mahnken led with 305 points. First-time competitors Rodney Dean / Nichole Hunter led the three-car Novice class with 830 points.

Competition remained fierce in section two, as M Henderson/Puffenberger scored only 10 points in the section for a total of 32. G Henderson/Moran took 16 points for a total 39, and Fekete/Shaffer scored 68 for a total of 96. Wernberg/Mahnken protected their Stock class lead, scoring single-digits on three of the eight legs in section two, bringing their score to 465. Botha/Quaderer took the Novice class lead by scoring 469 in section two for a total of 1306.

At the completion of about 325 rally miles and 22 controls, scores remained impressively low. At the finish, M Henderson/Puffenberger were first overall and first in equipped with 52 points. G Henderson/Moran were only one point behind at 53. Fekete/Shaffer placed first in Limited, third overall with 110 points. Wernberg/Mahnken took their first-ever Stock class win with 465 points, having the

lowest Stock score in every section, even when Scott/Baerkircher (at 1398 points) stayed on the road. Botha/Quaderer won Novice class with 1306 points, followed closely by Dean/Hunter at 1415.

The Press On Regardless award, with a free entry to the 1997 POR Rally went to Colin Botha and Jamie Quaderer. After spending way too much time in the ditch on Tipsico Lake Rd, they "pressed on" to complete the first section, finding several controls already closed down to make the rotations to their next assignment. With well-executed Time Allowances at the controls they did find open, Botha/Quaderer managed to keep their section one score low enough to ultimately take the Novice class win.

The organizers thank the control workers who put in a full night's work with each crew working five controls. Some of the control rotations were pretty tight, but no controls were dropped due to a crew being unable to open on time. Perhaps some of the control crews had as challenging a drive as the competitors several times during the night!

FINAL RESULTS

Car Name	Town	Region	Vehicle	Cls	Score	O/A	Cls
5 Mark Henderson John Puffenberger	Dearborn, MI Bloomdale, OH	Detroit Detroit	91 Subaru Legacy Turbo	E	52	1	1
6 Gene Henderson Rob Moran	Pinckney, MI Westland, MI	Detroit Detroit	89 BMW 325 IX	E	53	2	2
7 Jim Fekete Jim Shaffer	Canton, MI Franklin, MI	Detroit Detroit	97 Chevrolet C/K Pickup	L	110	3	1
10 Jeff Wernberg Brian Mahnken	Rochester, MI Pinckney, MI	Detroit Detroit	86 Volkswagen GTI	S	544	4	1
11 Colin Botha Jamie Quaderer	Flint, MI Chesaning, MI	Guest Guest	87 Acura Integra	N	1449	5	1
8 Brian Scott Marlena Baerkircher	Milford, MI Perrysburg, OH	Detroit Detroit	1991 Ford Ranger Pickup	S	1513	6	2
9 Rodney Dean Nichole Hunter	Rochester Hls, MI Waterford, MI	Guest Guest	96 Ford F-150 Pickup	N	1849	7	2
4 Scott Harvey, Jr Jim Mickle	Waterford, MI Shelby Twp, MI	Detroit Detroit	1991 Eagle Talon	E	2483	8	3
3 Greg Ginter Rick Munie	Dearborn, MI Belleville, MI	Guest Guest	97 Ford F-250 HD Pickup	N	3819	9	3
1 Herb Spencer Mark Hainen	Portage, OH Lambertville, MI	NWOR Guest	88 BMW 325 IX	L	4400	DNS	
2 Bruce Fisher Tom Bell	Dimondale, MI Traverse City, MI	Detroit SVR	88 Mazda 323 GTX	L	4400	DNS	

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TOTAL SCORE	CAR #	TEAM DRIVER/NAVIGATOR	CLASS	TIME	TIME	TIME	TIME	TIME	TIME	TIME	TIME	TIME	TIME	TIME	TIME	TIME	TIME	TIME	TIME	TIME	TIME	TIME	TIME	SPEC POINT	TOTAL SCORE	CAR #	CLASS																
				5847	2058	1124	1313	2379	125	3903	2208	790	3272	2351	1261	124	2577	4476	49	1956	2694	1163	1835					2435	1471	LEG 1	LEG 2	LEG 3	LEG 4	LEG 5	LEG 6	LEG 7	LEG 8	LEG 9	LEG 10	LEG 11	LEG 12	LEG 13	LEG 14
4400	1	SPENCER/AINEN	L	200	200	200	200	200	200	200	200	200	200	200	200	200	200	200	200	200	200	200	200	0	4400	1	L																
4400	2	FISHER / BELL	L	200	200	200	200	200	200	200	200	200	200	200	200	200	200	200	200	200	200	200	200	0	4400	2	L																
3819	3	GINTER / MUNIE	N	200	200	200	200	199	200	200	85	70	200	200	52	13	200	200	200	200	200	200	200	0	3819	3	N																
2483	4	HARVEY / MICKLE	E	0	1	1	75	1	2	0	1	1	1	200	200	200	200	200	200	200	200	200	0	2483	4	E																	
52	5	M HENDERSON / PUFFENBERGER	E	1	9	2	2	2	4	1	2	1	1	2	0	2	3	0	0	2	2	3	1	5	7	0	52	5	E														
53	6	G HENDERSON / MORAN	E	2	2	1	8	2	3	0	4	1	3	2	2	1	5	3	0	2	1	0	1	4	6	0	53	6	E														
110	7	FEKETE / SHAFER	L	4	0	7	6	2	3	0	2	1	3	48	0	1	15	2	2	4	2	1	1	1	5	0	110	7	L														
1513	8	SCOTT / BAERKIRCHER	S	18	4	200	200	200	200	200	200	17	11	1	10	0	110	28	1	27	28	33	10	15	2	0	1513	8	S														
1849	9	DEAN / HUNTER	N	107	126	200	14	153	20	198	12	2	13	16	30	124	200	200	0	63	90	134	26	21	100	0	1849	9	N														
544	10	WERNBERG / MAHNKEN	S	17	32	55	72	35	13	59	22	6	1	36	34	2	52	16	13	23	34	6	5	2	7	0	544	10	S														
1449	11	BOTHA / QUADERER	N	57	48	200	115	17	2	200	200	34	8	200	56	14	77	31	49	15	87	3	6	5	27	0	1449	11	N														

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The first rally section covered a northern loop through Oakland and Livingston counties. Several competitors were still developing their "ice legs", with two cars being drawn off the road by a "magnetic ditch" at a down-hill off-camber curve on Topsisco Lake Road. Valiant efforts by fellow competitors and the sweep crew extricated the competitors from the ditch, with one continuing on course and the other returning to the rally headquarters to regroup for the second section. At the first break, the three lead cars were separated by 2 points! The Equipped teams of Gene Henderson / Rob Moran, Mark Henderson / John Puffenberger and the Limited team of Jim Fekete / Jim Shaffer had 22, 23, and 24 points, respectively. The other Equipped team, Scott Harvey, Jr. / Jim Mickle had effectively eliminated themselves from competition at 81 points, running Leg 4 at a 35 CAST instead of the assigned 33 CAST due to a mis-read Leg Critique slip. The only other Limited class entries failed to show up at the start, so Fekete/Shaffer had the class win in the bag, and were running for the overall win. In Stock class, Jeff Wernberg / Brian Mahnken led with 305 points. Brian Scott / Marlena Baerkircher maxed six legs due to the ditching on Topsisco Lake Rd, and had a lot of catching up to do at 1220 points. First-time competitors Rodney Dean / Nichole Hunter led the three-car Novice class with 830 points. "Experienced" Novice competitors Colin Botha / Jamie Quaderer were close behind at 837 points, having recovered from a trip into the ditch, and artfully buying time whenever they could find controls open. First-time competitors Greg Ginter / Rick Munie were kind enough to assist Botha/Quaderer and Scott/Baerkircher out of the ditch with their 4WD Ford F-250, and wound up maxing most of the legs in the first section, carrying 1484 of a possible 1600 points at the break.

Section Two took the competitors on a southwestern loop through Hell (it's the name of a town west of Pinckney) and the Waterloo Recreation Area. Competition remained fierce, as M Henderson/Puffenberger scored only 10 points in the section for a total of

32. G Henderson/Moran took 16 points for a total 39, and Fekete/Shaffer scored 26 for a total of 50. Wernberg/Mahnken protected their Stock class lead, scoring single-digits on three of the eight legs in section two, bringing their score to 485. Scott/Baerkircher scored 178 points in the second section, for a total of 1398. Botha/Quaderer took the Novice class lead by scoring 489 in section two for a total of 1306. Dean/Hunter kept it close, taking an additional 585 points for a 1415 total. Ginter/Munie were improving their leg scores, but still took another 1135 points for a total of 2819.

Finally, section three contained a return trip to Hell, looping just inside the section two route. At the completion of about 325 rally miles and 22 controls, scores remained impressively low. At the finish, M Henderson/Puffenberger were first overall and first in equipped with 52 points. G Henderson/Moran were only one point behind at 53. Fekete/Shaffer placed first in Limited, third overall with 110 points. Wernberg/Mahnken took their first-ever Stock class win with 485 points, having the lowest Stock score in every section, even when Scott/Baerkircher (at 1398 points) stayed on the road. Botha/Quaderer won Novice class with 1306 points, followed closely by Dean/Hunter at 1415.

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