

SERIES REPORTS

Reports from SCCA's National Competition Series

Winter Rally Reports

On Rallying

Road Rally

by James Heine



Winter provided its share of entertainment this year: A healthy contingent of teams

turned out in the Central, Northeast and Southeast Divisions to share in some frosty fun by way of four Divisionals: Detroit Region's Son of Sno*Drift and Finger Lakes Region's There and Back Again on Jan. 11; and NeOhio Region's Ohio Winter Rally and Old Dominion Region's Wicked Winter Ways on Feb. 1.

Boasting a field of 46 cars, including 24 novice teams, Son of Sno*Drift left rallymaster **Scott Harvey Jr.** wondering whether he should impose an entry cap on his "little" event.

"In addition to trying to make this rally beginner-friendly, I have also tried to keep it fun and interesting for the experienced competitors," Harvey says. "My goal was to encourage a large entry and to keep the rally simple, so as not to intimidate the neophytes. I think we have achieved that goal. However, as we may be seeing in ProRally, we have now become victims of our own success."

Ron Johnstonbaugh and **Jack von Kaenel** won a hard-fought contest with **Dave and Daniel Harkcom** and **Tom and Tyler Bell** for both overall and Equipped class honors at Son of Sno*Drift. The Harkcoms finished second, the Tylers third. The scores for the top three teams were 27, 35 and 44 points respectively for 28 scored controls.

In Limited, **Jim Fekete** and **Jim**

Shaffer outlasted **Steve Phillips** and **Paul Gilbert** to finish seventh overall and first in class. In Stock, perennial champs **Bob Kay** and **Mike Bennett** cruised to a well-deserved win over **Chris Smith** and **Doug Jensen**. Newcomers **Mark Roter** and **Neil Johnson** took top Novice honors.

In Northeast Division, veterans **Fred Cochran** and **Pete Schneider** scored a comfortable 158-309 win over **Alan** and **Amy Smith**, gaining both overall and Equipped honors at There and Back Again.

While the Smiths' 309 was good enough for fourth overall, the Stock team of **Nick Chebeleu** and **Dan Angelescu** proved that timekeeping equipment isn't everything. Their 199 put them first in Stock and second overall in the 24-car event. **Dan Wiesen** and **Matt Henry** followed Chebeleu/Angelescu in the class standings, and their 307 was also good enough to nudge the Smiths out of third overall.

In Limited, **Gary Thomas** and **Andy Kopychev** finished first in class and eighth overall in the field, while **James Greene** and **Simon Hova** won the Novice competition.

Moving forward three weeks, Johnstonbaugh and von Kaenel found themselves a bit handicapped at the Ohio Winter Rally after Johnstonbaugh's Mitsubishi Eclipse expired shortly before the event, forcing them to opt for backup transportation.

"Going from all-wheel drive

and 300 horsepower to a two-wheel-drive Ford Focus was a tough choice, but these guys didn't win the National Championship by quitting," says rallymaster **Ken Swarm**. "Partway through the rally they also lost the pickup on their odo, but they still managed single-digit scores throughout, which was good enough for third place."

The top OWR team? Brothers **Jon** and **Greg Lester** in a 1980s-vintage Audi quattro: "They scored a measly 10 points for the entire rally," Swarm says. "That's a great score on a dry tarmac rally; it's awesome in conditions that ranged from mud to snow to ice to slush."

Mark Henderson and new navigator **Jonathan Good** cruised to a fine second-place finish overall and in class E with 14 points.

In Limited, British car restorer **Eric Jones** and long-time friend **Bill Potvin** nearly won the class in Jones' venerable MGB after Fekete and Shaffer deposited their car in a snow bank. Jones and Potvin poured it on and finished the night with an 86, only to have the leg on which Fekete and Shaffer got stuck tossed from scoring because of a route error, giving the Detroit Region pair a 69 for the rally and another class win.

"In my opinion, the best score of the rally was turned in by the Stock team of **Mike** and **Jeff Bennett**," Swarm says. "This was one of Jeff's first rallies as a driver, and they scored an amazing 39 points for the 11 scored controls."

In the rally's Novice class, **Jon Miller** and **Pawel Razny** took home top honors, finishing 14th overall in the 36-car field.

Finally, at Wicked Winter Ways, **Bob** and **Dan Kirby** won both Limited and overall honors, besting Equipped class winners **Betsy** and **Chuck Edwards** by a mere four points, 73-77, for the rally's top position. **Chris Bean** and **Jim Mirrielees** won Stock (210), and **Ken** and **David Sprankle** (662) triumphed in Novice.

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Steve Phillips and Paul Gilbert finished second in class L at Detroit Region's Son of Sno*Drift rally in a Saab.