

## **NAC Insurance International Rally of Whangarei Post-event press conference**

### **Hayden Paddon**

*#3 Mitsubishi Lancer - overall winner, NZRC winner, Pacific Cup winner, leading Rising Stars International Award competition, and qualified for Pirelli Star Driver Asia Pacific final in Australia in September*

Can't really complain. A bit hard keeping pace with Richard. Being first on the road this morning, a bit of a challenge I now know how Cody feels. Thought we did alright on the loose gravel both days, but that's where we've struggled in the past. Made a few changes before we came here, set up seemed to work quite well. So hopefully that's positive for the remaining two local rounds where we'll be in a similar road position. We had four targets and four bulls' eyes, so can't ask for anything better.

The second-ever winner of Pacific Cup. Something special. I guess the competition hasn't been very strong but the events have been challenging. It's great to have an international championship on our CV, especially after all three drivers came out of New Caledonia with no points and then all our problems in Queensland and finishing on three wheels. So to come here and virtually finish only one rally out of the three and win the championship, just goes to show how tough it was.

Unfortunately our budget doesn't allow any other APRC events this year.

Now our commitment is for the Pirelli Star Driver, although we're always looking for further opportunities and mileage overseas – as Cody says some of those int. events it's a completely different frame of mind and driving style required. That's all things I still have to learn yet.

### **Cody Crocker**

*#1 Subaru Impreza - second overall, first APRC, leading APRC series*

Very, very happy with APRC results. That's fantastic. Always expected the Kiwis to be very quick we thought it was always down to road position and we kept on complaining and now Hayden's gone and proved our theory completely wrong, we're stuffed now! Obviously very tough going, we had a bit of a set-up issue yesterday and the car wasn't quite right, we fixed it today and it seemed better.

Probably a bit of local knowledge here, but I've done 7-8 Rally New Zealand's on these roads. These roads are challenging but they're quite good in that you can attack very, very hard – except when you're car one on the road – the roads in Asia and Indonesia are very different, very technical and very treacherous and you've got conditions with the heat to contend with. Drivers here are very quick, so that puts the challenge on us and we'll go to Japan and there will be several Japanese drivers who are very fast, so it's challenging wherever you go.

### **Brendan Reeves**

*#9 Subaru Impreza – third overall, already qualified for Pirelli Star Driver Asia Pacific final from result in Rally Queensland*

Came to this event for some practice for our Pirelli Star Driver final in WRC Australia. We really like the roads and Emma's car did us proud. Did a really good job, so really happy with the weekend. My car at home is just the same as Emma's except it's left-hand-drive. Bought our engine and gearbox to use this weekend so we know the set-up. Worked really well. Think the roads back home will be similar, fast, for the final, so that should put us in good stead for that event.

If we get the Pirelli final win, I'll think about what that means then. It's such a big effort to get to that so I've been concentrating on preparing through events like this and a couple more events at home. There's talk that the Pirelli Star Driver final is only six stages long, so everyone will have their cars as light as possible, but that's all to be decided.

### **Katsuhiko Taguchi**

*#2 Mitsubishi Lancer – fourth overall, second APRC competitor, second in APRC series*

Finished second, it is very, very good. Also we're very happy compared to last year our stage times improved a lot so this is a very good step-up for our team and our car. Our only complaint is 0.1 seconds today to Emma. [lots of laughter] Very disappointing for me today; we tried very, very hard, flat out, pushing hard, but still not enough. Still a good result for us.

Last year we win Japan event, heavy rain, special conditions. Every year it's very close, very, very good fight. Want a dry rally.

### **Emma Gilmour**

*#5 Subaru Impreza – fifth overall, third APRC competitor, third in APRC series*

Rhianon and I had a great weekend, enjoyed driving the new car – probably would have happier in the old car which Brendan drove a bit quicker [more laughter]. No, the new car ran really well and it handles fantastic. Probably still got a few things to improve so it's going a bit quicker. Second event in the car. We had a few problems with the turbo and then engine problems later on this afternoon so get to the finish with such a good result is great for us and the team.

Really enjoyed driving this car this weekend, the team's second event for the car, it's at a really good level and we can only get better from there. Coming from NZRC car which feels like a comfy old glove into this one, there's just a bit to get used to.

Doing well in championship now. With Cody as our number one driver and Katsu as the number one MRF driver, but as long as I'm beating Gaurav Gill, the other MRF driver, so I'm on the podium. I've driven in Japan before, but the hot climates in Malaysia and Indonesia will be a learning curve for Rhianon and I. It's still learning and still learning competitive stage times.

**Kieran Hall**

*#12 Subaru Impreza – sixth overall, second qualifier for Pirelli Star Driver Asia Pacific final in Australia in September*

This means a lot to us. Means international exposure, something we've not got in the budget at the moment, but I'm sure we'll get up to it. Looking forward to the challenge. Great to have Brendan and those come over and show us what sort of speed can be achieved.