

ARC Round 5 - '82 LCCA Alpine Rally



Geoff Portman and Ross Runnalls won their second successive Australian Rally Championship with a dominant performance in this year's Alpine Rally .

Over 100 entries were received by the Light Car Club , with 90 cars finally starting the rally . This rugged event featured its spectacular scenery and was held in typically hot conditions

Based typically in Bright , the Rally started with the usual blast around the local dirt track , where Ed Mulligan was fastest in his BDA Escort , just a second ahead of Ian Hill in a similar vehicle. But that's virtually where the Escort assault ended .

The event followed on with stages in the nearby pine plantations enroute to the first break at Beechworth . David Officer dropped 20 minutes with a problem with his distributor , which was replaced .

Bob Watson was making the debut of his Renault R5 turbo , but differential failure caused its retirement on just the second stage .

Geoff Portman had made a cautious start , and was concerned about his engine temperatures , but the problem was fortunately traced to a faulty gauge . Hugh Bell somehow ran out of fuel , and Greg Carr broke the differential in the Fiat 131 Abarth . It was repaired with minimal time loss , but dropped them down a couple of places .

At the break at Beechworth the Foresters led from Hugh Bell , Fury / Brown , Steve Ashton / Ro Nixon , and Greg Carr / Fred Gocentas .

Shortly after George Fury retired the impressive Datsun 210 when navigator Simon Brown became quite ill with suspected food poisoning .

NSW competitors Ian Hill (Escort) and John Atkinson (Stanza) both retired with a blown head gasket , and differential problems respectively . And Ed Mulligan had a water pump fail .

On the return run back to Bright on Saturday night , Portman simply flew . Out in front with a dust-free run , he extended his lead from the duelling pair of Steve Ashton and Ro Nixon , and Doug Thompson / Ron Lugg , closely chased by Brian Smith and Peter Mignot in their Galant . Hugh Bell's hopes were dashed when electrical problems left him without driving lights .

Peter Clark (NSW) and John Waterhouse (ACT) had moved up into the top ten , and Greg Carr had fought back strongly , to be in 15th place by the Division end . Chris Brown had bumped a bank in his Datsun , then suffered engine problems and Retired

Sunday dawned even more hotter and dustier than Saturday . Portman / Runnalls backed off , and drove steadily to the finish . However the battle for second place continued , and was finally resolved by less than a minute , with locals Thompson and Lugg impressively taking honours . They achieved a result one place better than last year .

But the dramatic recovery came from Greg Carr , who flew through the stages to finally finish in fourth place , just seconds ahead of Ian Swan and Derek Rawson .

Results : 1982 Alpine Rally

1 st	Geoff Portman / Ross Runnalls	Datsun 1600	340.56
2 nd	Doug Thomspen / Ron Lugg	Datsun Stanza	354.39
3 rd	Steve Ashton / Rosemary Nixon	Datsun 1600	355.18
4 th	Greg Carr / Fred Gocentas	Fiat 131 Ar bath	359.53
5 th	Ian Swan / Derek Rawson	Datsun Stanza	360.39
6 th	Brian Smith / Peter Mignot	Galant	361.37
7 th	Peter Clarke / Mick Harker	Stanza	362.41
8 th	Paul Bramble / Kel Haynes	Lancer	364.34
9 th	Chris Berry / Ray Stubbs	Datsun	364.44
10 th	Jon Waterhouse / Gregory Avon	Mazda RX7	366.04