



PRESS RELEASE

For immediate release

CROCKER LEADS AFTER LEG ONE

15th August, Kota Tinggi – A jubilant Cody Crocker finished Leg One of the FIA ASIA PACIFIC RALLY CHAMPIONSHIP (APRC) ANCOM Malaysian Rally 2009 (MR9) in 2hrs 3min 15sec (provisional result).

Crocker of the Motor Image Racing Team led from the outset in his Subaru Impreza WRX with his biggest competitor Katsu Taguchi chasing closely behind him.

It looked like Taguchi was going to finish second until early in Special Stage 7 (SS7) he slid his Mitsubishi Lancer Evo 9 into a ditch and putting him out of the race. “We didn’t realize that corner was as slippery as it was. Our momentum carried us off the edge of the road, into the gutter sideways and we had no traction to get out,” said Mark Stacey, Taguchi’s co-driver.

Rain early in the day had made the Stages very slippery which increased the difficulty of the already tricky course.

Crocker said, “This is a huge event for us and key for a lot of teams because it is the first of the really tough APRC events. I think Katsu had put a lot of pressure on himself to beat us and we had a lot of pressure on ourselves too, but we’re happy to have finished strongly today.”

Coming into this Round in second place on the points table, Taguchi had said that he planned to win the next three Rounds to try to beat Crocker in the Championship. With the upset today he has to rethink his strategy. “We will start again tomorrow to try to get three bonus points for the Championship and we’ll reassess what we can do in the rallies ahead,” added Taguchi.

The final two Rounds of the APRC will be held in Indonesia in October and China in November.

With Taguchi out, New Zealand’s Emma Gilmour finished comfortably in second place, 8min 12sec behind her team mate Crocker. Rifat Sungkar of Indonesia drove his Mitsubishi Lancer Evo 8 to third in 2hr 21min 44sec.

Both Gaurav Gill and Karamjit Singh retired from the race after failing to complete SS2. Gaurav’s Mitsubishi Lancer Evo 10 had mechanical problems and Karamjit put the Proton Satria Neo S2000 into a ditch and had to be towed out.

“In SS1 we stalled many times and we had to reverse many times so we lost more than a minute. Then in SS2 we were doing much better but unfortunately I clipped a corner too early and ditched the car,” Karamjit said. He and co-driver Jagdev Singh will start again tomorrow (Sunday).

In the first Leg of Round 3 of the Malaysian Rally Championship (MRC) which is being run concurrently, Saladin Mazlan of the Felda Rally Team finished first in 2hr 17min 4sec. 2min 22sec behind Saladin was Gunaseelan Rajoo of the GSR Pennzoil Racing team. Saladin's team mate Rozali Abdullah finished today in third in 2hr 20min 59sec. All three are entered in the 4WD and P12 categories.

"We are gloriously happy," said Saladin's co-driver Arish Qutb Ahmad Khan. "We had a bit of trouble in SS1&2 when our brakes failed, but once they were fixed we pushed hard and got a great result," he added.

In the 2WD category Hong Kong entrant Clayton Check (P11) finished in front with a time of 2hr 37min 11sec, 4min 19sec in front of Junior driver, Faidzal Alang (P10).

The competitors are racing through the oil-palm plantations of Kota Tinggi. They will complete 16 SS over 227.70kms this weekend. Leg Two starts tomorrow morning (Sunday) at 6.30am.

Full results can be found at www.malaysianrally.com.

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For more information about this press release please contact:

Diane Barton, Media Director MR9

M: +6017 286 2208 Email: diane@pdq.com.my