

Toyota Heads to STPR with Championship in Sight

May 31, 2017

Plano, Texas, May 31, 2017— The Rally RAV4 and Ryan Millen combination swept the first half of the season in the American Rally Association's 2WD class.

Next on the schedule is the Susquehannock Trail Performance Rally (STPR), where another victory could make the 2017 championship battle all but academic.

Chief championship rival Cam Steely dropped from contention after his Ford Fiesta suffered a series of mechanical failures. His challenges highlight the critical advantage of Toyota's impressive durability this season.

STPR's rough, heavily wooded stages include some of the narrowest and most slippery roads of the season.

Speaking about the tricky driving surface with which the RAV4 will have to contend, Millen said, "It's clay, and if it gets a ton of moisture, it's really slippery."

With any mistakes, likely to result in inordinate amounts of lost time, Millen and co-driver Rhianon Gelsomino's season-long emphasis on refining pace notes could take on even more importance than usual this weekend.

Most of the roads along STPR's 15 stages also were featured in last year's event, but the duo isn't taking that familiarity for granted. Instead, they're using it as a catalyst to make their pace notes and communication even more efficient.

"Every time I do an event, I go back and I watch the videos, and I tell Rhianon what I want changed," Millen said. "It's a great opportunity for us to keep working on the notes."

Millen can clinch the 2WD championship with a win and a finish of fourth or lower by his nearest competitor, Dave Wallingford. While the championship goal is visible on the horizon, Gelsomino is intent on pushing Millen to pilot the RAV4 to a perfect season.

"If we don't do that, we won't be heartbroken," she said of her target of going six for six on the season. "But at the end of the day, if you can meet a goal like that, that's the ultimate, isn't it?"

More information on the Rally RAV4 program can be found at rallyrav4.com.

The Susquehannock Trail Performance Rally has been run every year since the 1970s. More information can be found at stpr.org.