

RAV4 Readies For Winner-Take-All Finale at Lake Superior

October 12, 2016

Torrance, Calif., October 12, 2016— Sometimes in racing it all comes down to the final race. It's one of the most exciting things a racing fan can take in. This weekend, at Lake Superior Performance Rally (LSPR) in Houghton, Mich., Ryan Millen, Christina Fate and the Rally RAV4 are hoping to add a definitive exclamation point to their Rally America season by winning the 2WD championship. The RAV4 and Millen share the lead in an exact points tie with the Ford Fiesta ST of Cameron Steely. Each has exactly 118 points in the 2WD Class after seven rounds. This eighth and final round's outcome will finally break the tie, and crown a victor.

"It's crazy to have worked so hard the whole year to have this come down to one race," said Millen. "I'm really proud of where we're at. To be in the fight is so rewarding."

With nearly 30 National competitors and a total of over 75 in both Regional and National competition, LSPR is sure to be a crowd pleaser. Fifteen stages over two days covering nearly 125 miles will be a grueling test of the rally RAV4 and Team Millen, but the team has been hustling all year to be in contention for this final crown.

"I think it's amazing, and we really want to win," said navigator, Fate. "We've grown a lot and learned a lot. It would be really special to win the championship."

The team has been preparing extra hard in preparation for LSPR. They've even been racing in additional regional rallies just to stay sharp. In fact, Millen just won the race at Prescott and is on full attack, ready to go.

Just about every part has been swapped out. Millen and team aren't taking any chances on fatigue cycles with the championship on the line. Reliability has been one of the RAV4 and the team's strongest assets, and they are looking to keep the car in perfect running order.

But sometimes reliability isn't always enough, so the team has lightened up the car even more, knowing that every pound counts, and sometimes it comes down to the wire.

Millen also feels that two things could really play in his favor, one is certain, the other is not. This year, LSPR has significant night-time stages, and that has been one of the places where Team Millen and the RAV4 have really shined. Secondly, weather is always a factor, but Millen is bullish in his ability to more deftly navigate the elements.

The starting order is always important to the team, and for this race, Millen and the RAV4 are staged eleventh on the road, a spot that the team has felt suits them just perfectly.

The team also feels that the first day will set the pace. If they can pull ahead by 20 or 30 seconds, it could really dictate the pace of the rally, and put big pressure on the nearest competitor. But at the end of the day, it is after all an endurance event, something Millen is quick to point out.

"You could push 110 percent and still finish second," said Millen. "If you crash out early, you're going to be in trouble, but at the same time, you have to push when the championship's on the line."

LSPR is an annual two-day stage rally that takes place in Michigan's Upper Peninsula. The event attracts competitors from all over the U.S., Canada, and beyond.

More information on the Rally RAV4 program can be found at www.RallyRAV4.com.

Information on LSPR and the Rally America series can be found at www.LSProRally.com and www.Rally-America.com.

High-resolution photography can be downloaded at toyotaneewsroom.com.