

Rally RAV4 Launches into NASA Rally Sport Season Opener

March 04, 2016

Torrance, Calif., March 4, 2016 — Race season beginnings can be nerve wracking, but driver Ryan Millen and his Toyota RAV4 SE are preparing to take on Sandblast Rally in Cheraw, South Carolina this coming Saturday.

The race marks the beginning of the NASA Rally Sport Atlantic Rally Cup, a 5-race competitive, stage-type rally series. And with more than 50 cars and over 30 motorcycles at Sandblast, this first event should prove a worthy challenge.

“It’s definitely a totally different rally for us,” said Millen. “Sand is something I’ve never rallied on before, but I have spent a lot of time on sand down in Baja. I think we’re good...my eye is always on the championship.”

Drivers aren’t the only ones with pressure on them when it comes to stage rally racing. The ever-critical navigator plays a key role too. Luckily for Ryan, he’ll be driving with his fiancée, Christina Fate.

“It’s up to me to figure out the notes, and read them in a way Ryan will understand,” said Fate. “Our system is a good system...ultimately, one way or another, it’s going to work.”

Back in January, Ryan netted a solid second place finish in Rally America’s Sno*Drift Rally, so the team has high hopes for a strong finish at Sandblast.

One interesting challenge is the motorcycles, as their tracks sometimes take away certain visual cues some drivers use by looking at the tracks from the cars to gauge the line and the speed of the corner.

And the team also hasn’t had much time to prepare for the event given a limited amount of time between the last rally and the upcoming contest. That coupled with a retrofit of the car’s exterior and other time consuming items, really place a stress on the entire team. But to Millen this is more than just racing and winning.

“My Dad did this 30 years ago, and he looks back on it so fondly,” gushed Millen. “So here I am 30 years later, and I get to do it with my best buds and the love of my life...it’s pretty cool.”

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

Information on Sandblast and the NASA Rally Sport series can be found at www.SandblastRally.com and www.NASARallySport.com.