

Rally RAV4 Wins Sandblast Rally

March 08, 2016



Torrance, Calif., March 8, 2016—This past weekend at the Sandblast Rally in Cheraw, South Carolina, Ryan Millen and his Toyota RAV4 SE took home the top step on the podium in the 2WD Class.

With nearly 100 competitors overall, and 15 in class, there was some serious competition, including a very fast SRT-4. But weather was the ultimate factor, and drivers able to adapt were rewarded handsomely.

Called Sandblast due to copious amounts of deep sand, all that changed when the rains came, turning the sand into mud and clay. The dangers were highlighted during one of the early stages.

“In the first stage, I went through two mud-holes and almost lost the car,” remembered Millen. “I was amazed at how slippery it was...you’ve got to really pay attention going through those.”

Navigator Christina Fate made quick work out of converting the NASA-supplied notes to align better with the pair’s existing system. It was a critical job, as it saved the RAV4 from several treacherous situations that wouldn’t have been known otherwise.

The fast, turbocharged SRT-4 ended up being the biggest competition, and was out front of both Stage 1 and

Stage 3. (Stage 2 was cancelled due to extreme conditions caused by the weather.) But in Stage 4 all of that changed, as Millen was able to move into the lead.

Ryan and Christina stepped up their game, focusing on being consistent and not making mistakes versus just pure, raw speed.

The strategy plus a bit of good fortune worked, as when the final tally came in, the RAV4 SE netted a total time of just over 61 minutes, a bit more than three minutes ahead of their nearest in-class competitor.

“You have to make less mistakes than anyone else,” said Millen. “It was really rewarding winning despite being so much heavier and having so much less power. It feels really good to get this win.”

The team now heads to Salem, MO for the second round of the Rally America series, fighting for championship points in that series as well.

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

Information on 100 Acre Wood and the Rally America series can be found at www.100AW.org and www.Rally-America.com.