

2016 OPRC competition report

With the 2016 competition season in the books, I look back on what was a year of some great successes and increased participation over 2015. This past year we reaped the benefits of the newly created ECRC Eastern Canadian Rally Championship with a number of out of province teams coming West to participate in the various rounds of the ECRC/OPRC championships.

This year we had 38 teams compete in the various rounds of the championship 12 of which competed in 3 or more events. This is an increase over 2015 at 21 teams only 5 of which competed in three or more rounds. The combination of the formation and efforts of the Growth committee and the momentum that the ECRC created was responsible in part to the growth the OPRC experienced in 2016. In addition to this we continue to experience great results from the growth of our sport at the club level. Both the introduction of Rally Sprint events and the continued success of the Rally Cross series and individual Rally Cross events have helped with the exposure of our sport to many more enthusiasts than ever before. MLRC leads the way with their successful rally cross series, KWRC with their Rally cross events, PMSC, MCO and MLRC with their Rally Sprint events all incrementally contribute to the overall health of our sport.

One of the challenges that we will always face is exposure. Over 4 years ago RSO entered into an agreement with CDNrally for the production of the OPRC program through YouTube video coverage and narration. Over the years the program has grown and has developed into a marketable tool that both competitors and the series use to generate interest and sponsorship. Vehicle tracking through EZtrack continues to be a great success and has become an invaluable tool for organizers; with CDN rally we are just scratching the surface of the promotional possibilities of this platform. In an effort to expand the reach of the program, CDNrally ran a successful pilot program at Rally Defi 2016 to include live tracking monitors in the service area going another step further at Rally of the Tall Pines to include OPRC Rally Radio. Proven to be a great success we plan to continue the rally radio program for 2017. With some enhancements coming for the future we will see even more capabilities from the EZtrack system. These efforts don't happen without their own challenges, the main one being the sponsorship drive to pay for the production and support of the programs themselves. This is an area which the growth committee will be working hard on for 2017.

MCO, KWRC (formerly PMSC for GCFR) and MLRC put on three of the best stand alone events in the country, run on some of the most technically challenging roads in any championship. Year after year these clubs and their individual members seek creative ways to improve their events and continue to get competitors to return. These events make the OPRC what it is and in many ways are the unsung heroes of our sport. A huge thank you goes out to Jim Morrow, Peter Watt, Derek Vincent for our fantastic stand alone events, Patrick Rainville and Ian Wright for the two amazing double billed events OPRC/CRC, and their entire organizing committees.

In the background the RSO BOD works diligently to ensure that the promotional channels remain open and provide the necessary support to ensure that results are achieved. Knowing that we need to

continue to seek new and exciting ways to bring our sport to the forefront, the following are some areas where we will put our energies for 2017.

Key areas of opportunity:

- Auto shows and club car events
- Continue to encourage and support participation in Rally Cross and Rally Sprint events within the region.
- Enhance and nurture growth initiatives
- Continue to seek corporate partners
- Promote and leverage the CDN rally program for 2017 and continue to encourage organizers and competitors alike to use the platform for their benefit.
- Continue to develop and promote the OPRC.ca website.
- Continue to broaden our reach for competitors.

Congratulations to Simon Vincent for capturing the overall driver championship for 2016. Simon has shown that, like his father, he can play in the major leagues with a lot less hardware at his disposal, this speaks volumes to his natural talents as a driver. The overall Leaderboard for the OPRC championship sounded strikingly familiar to those of years past even at the national level, with names like Simon, Besner, and Laverdiere. The 2016 championship was hotly contested and a sincere thank you goes out to all of the teams that made it so.

2017 rings in a new year of competition and will continue to present us with similar challenges to the last few years, but I am confident that with the ground work that has taken place and continues to happen, our sport will persevere and we will see increased participation numbers in the near future.

It has been my pleasure to serve our sport in this capacity for the past 6 years. I look forward to 2017 and beyond, I firmly believe that we provide unbeatable quality and value in our events.

Bring on 2017!

Warren Haywood

Vice President Rallysport Ontario .perf.