

Subaru of New Zealand

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Media Information

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Masons in control

Masterton husband and wife rally team Richard and Sara Mason had total control of the opening round of the national rally championship in their Subaru Impreza WRX STI, winning both heats over the weekend.

The pair headed home the field on Saturday by more than a minute and then repeated the dose yesterday (Sunday) by the same margin to gain maximum title points from the two days.

Defending champion Hayden Paddon from Geraldine finished second both days and Emma Gilmour in another Subaru was third in a continuation of the good form she had at the end of last year.

The Masons – former double champions - won ten of the 13 special stages held over the two days and were never headed throughout the competition.

“It’s a great start to the season,” said Richard Mason. “Exactly what we wanted to grab an advantage and come away with an early lead in the series and the first haul of championship points.”

“We were pleasantly surprised how well it went,” said Mason. We set our own pace which proved to be more than enough to see us through.”

After a slightly slowish start on Saturday morning, Gilmour picked up the pace in the afternoon, finishing second fastest to Mason on two stages and winning the final test to close to within 13 seconds of Paddon.

Yesterday the former Dunedin driver who now lives in Hamilton had to withstand a strong late charge from former champion Chris West of Christchurch to finish third for the day and the weekend.

Local favourite Stewart Taylor hit a bank on the first stage on Saturday and then had turbocharger problems yesterday with his Mitsubishi, while West failed to score any points on the opening day after the linkages between the gear lever and transmission broke on his Lancer.

The next round of the championship is based at Dunedin on May 16 and 17.



The Masons on their way to spread eagling the field in Hawkes Bay

Hawkes Bay Rally Results.-

- Heat 1: 1, R & S Mason (Subaru Impreza WRX STI) 1h 52m 20.5s;
 2, H Paddon, J Kennard (Mitsubishi Lancer Evo9) 1.53.33.6;
 3, E Gilmour, G Macneall (Subaru Impreza WRX STI) 1.53.47.2;
 4, G Argyle, P Deakin (Mitsubishi Lancer Evo7) 1.54.46.3;
 5, G Smith, C Ward (Mitsubishi Lancer Evo6) 1.54.53.1;
 6, D Sumner, P Fallon (Mitsubishi Evo9) 1.56.06.9.

Heat 2: 1, R & S Mason, 1.33.31.3;
2, Paddon, Kennard, 1.34.30.4;
3, Gilmour, Macneall, 1.35.29.4;
4, C West, G Cowan (Mitsubishi Lancer Evo9) 1.35.45.1;
5, Argyle, Deakin, 1.36.42.2;
6, M Jansen, J Farmer (Subaru Impreza WRX STI) 1.37.20.4

Championship points: 1, R Mason, 74; 2, H Paddon, 62; 3, E Gilmour, 52; 4, M Jansen, 41;
5, J Marston (Mitsubishi Lancer Evo8) 33; 6, P Malley (Ford Fiesta ST) 31.

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