



Source: Toby Cooper for offroadracing.com.au

The ARB Town and Country Club Tyres Stackpoole 400 was a mixture of highs and lows for the 60 plus teams that nominated for the first round of the 2018 ARB Australian Off Road Racing Championship.

Often in the world of motor sport it's referred to as "IF ONLY", and Griffith was no different. As the dust settles from the Talbot Cox #16 victory, 41 crews will look back on their weekend's competition at Stackpoole with different memories than those who finished.

Stackpoole landowner Andy Ryan had a less than ideal lead up to the event, engine dramas on Wednesday saw the Alumi Craft #50 on the trailer and heading to Sydney for a rebuild. After an extraordinary effort from the HOT team to get the machine back to Griffith early on Friday morning, it unfortunately suffered another failure as it was being driven across the paddocks to Stackpoole. Ryan relegated to the recovery team for the weekend.

Tony Fehlhaber #138 was another to fail early; sheared torque converter drive bolts during reconnaissance ending their Stackpoole campaign. Brett Milton #406 suffered engine failure in reconnaissance while Paul Youman #427 developed a terminal knock in the engine of the Razorback Trophy Truck as it was being driven from the pit bay to the scrutiny shed. After several hours of trying to diagnose and rectify the problem, they ultimately withdrew from the event.

Sunday pole sitter Raana Horan #89 of Big Black Motorsport led the event half way through the first lap when the Jimco Aussie Special refused to go due to alternator issues; a tough pill to swallow for the New Zealand crew who will be amongst those to watch at Mildura. 2013 event winner Glenn Owen #30 could not capitalise on his solid prologue run, succumbing to consecutive flat tyres on lap two, ending his charge.

Two times Stackpole champion Jack Rhodes #91 found his groove mid race until a blown turbo gasket on his final lap ended his run; young gun Tyler Owen #41 was positioned for a podium finish though succumbed to fuel issues on the penultimate lap.

Buddy Crowe's #4 return to off road racing came to a halt on lap 1 after the Jimco Champion experienced an electrical issue; North Queenslander Paul White #73 suffered an engine misfire in his GET machine, stopping mid lap to try and fix, continuing on to complete the lap only to withdraw in the service break. Gary Hardie #86, amidst a solid race, suffered a broken front suspension arm on the final lap. Fellow Unlimited buggy Class competitors Brett Lewis #46 succumbed to tyre dramas and Glenn McIntyre #43 with a throttle position sensor failure, both had their weekends end prematurely.

New Zealand's Richard Crabb #98 bowed out on the opening lap due to engine failure, likewise local campaigner Terry Molloy #970 on lap 4, along with South Australia's Wes Cowie #191 on lap 3, whilst Glenn Spizzo's #126 weekend ended in the prologue dash with the same diagnosis. Class 1 competitors Jeff Cripps #141 misfire and Jason Richards #119 gearbox failed to see the checkered flag.



A majority of the Class 4 competitors ran into dramas on race day; John Smith #445 gearbox, Peter Sibson #401 engine fire, Pat McCauley #404 power steering and Michael Denham #433 all failed to see out the full 420kms. Class 10 only had the two finishers, with Anthony Abson #1026 broken CV, Chris Boon #1091 electrical and Hugh Austin #1088 all failing to finish.

Local favourites Steven Graham #1001 misfire, Dean Meginley #1087 front suspension failure, Rhett Standen #225 rear suspension failure, and Peter Hunt lost the buggy's bash plate after landing heavily off the quarry jump, and nursed the #253 buggy to the end of the lap but decided against continuing. Phil Lovett #666 broke a front axle early on lap 2 ending his Class 6 assault, Jason Forssman #774 racing his Class 7 Patrol, experienced an early race flat tyre before retiring after losing a wheel whilst Class 8 competitor Stuart Zlotkowski #811 who made

the long trip down from the Northern Territory was stopped by a front end failure.

It was a disappointing opening round for Chapmans Offroad Racing; Clayton #815 in the teams Class 8 Mitsubishi Triton failed to greet the start on Saturday after an unknown engine issue, whilst brother Stuart #520 in the Class 5 was retired early due to a suspicious oil pressure – one things for sure they'll be back bigger and better at Mildura.

Others to exit the Stackpoole 400 early on race day include –

Karl Power #246 – Head Gasket

Mark Hardman #88 – breaks/overheating

Jamie Muirhead #381 – Front Suspension

Peter Carr #698 – Radiator Hose

Scott Tymkin #647 & Ian Terry #660 - DNF