

## Rentsch's conquer the west

Sunday, 23 March 2008

Shannon and Ian Rentsch have now finished the ARB Pinjarra Engineering Hyden 400 after three attempts and did so in blistering style by winning the event which was Round 1 of the 2008 Australian Off Road Championship. The Rentsch's winning margin was 2 minutes and 2 seconds after the 400 km and a total time of 3h50m50.23s. They endured dust during the Prologue on Saturday morning, rain and mud on the leg to Hyden and the same for the return to Smithy's place, near perfect track conditions for the three laps on Sunday morning and then the dust for the final two laps on Sunday afternoon. Shannon demonstrated the consistency and patience with his driving that had taken him to three past Australian Championships. Their preparation and planning for the event paid dividends in that they had no problems with the Rentsch's Auto Salvage Sims Metal Nissan V6 Turbo Charged Chenoweth Pro class buggy throughout the weekend's competition.

Brad Prout driving the Unicap Prout Partners Chev V8 Jimco Pro class buggy drove solidly throughout the event to finish in second place with a time of 3h52m7.23s. Prout was extremely pleased with his two finish place improvement over last year. Prout said "I enjoy the track and racing at Hyden and will continue to support the event whilst it is a round of the AORC. The event organisers, the Western Desert Racers, have put together a great event with a good track and superb facilities here at Smithy's Place." Prout continued "The improvements made to the Jimco with the new Shane Wilson engine and modifications to the suspension have made it much easier to drive and I look to further the next round at Donald in Victoria."

Hayden Bentley and Ben Chivell the current Australian Off Road Champions completed the ARB Pinjarra Engineering Hyden 400 in a time of 3h52m36.21s putting them in third place overall for the event. Bentley drove the Bentley's Cabin Park Chev V8 powered Jimco with controlled aggression and also won the award for the most spectacular jump with some high and long launches over the jump on the front straight of the Hyden track.

Fourth place went to the third of the Robinson Outer Bounds Racing buggies driven by Travis Robinson and Paul Currie in a time of 4h00m31.60s. Travis demonstrated great maturity in his driving for his first race now that he is eligible to drive in championship events. Travis was required to complete an Observed License Test to obtain his CAMS competition license as part of the Prologue for the event as this was his first competitive drive in Off Road Racing though he had navigated on numerous occasions for his father Brian and brother Beau. As he gained more track time over the event he became more comfortable driving the RR Developments Chev 5.7l V8 powered Jimco and this showed in the lap times. Travis said after he had completed the event "The ex Buddy Crowe Jimco was fantastic to drive and now I have points on the board for this year's championship whereas Dad and Beau don't. I am looking forward to remaining five rounds of the championship."

James Madden and Craig Trehwella in The Off Road Shop Subaru powered Pro class buggy drove consistently to finish in fifth place with a time of 4h18m29.12s.

Sixth position went to the Goodyear Off Road Rush crew of Matt Western and Dieter Allen in the Toyota V8 powered Southern Cross Pro class buggy with a total time of 4h26m2.88s.

Next and first in the Extreme 2WD class was Brad Gallard and Scott Modistach in the large and immaculate Geiser Bros 6 litre Chev V8 Trophy Truck. The Trophy Truck was very popular with the spectators as it leaped spectacularly over the many jumps that were part of the course.

Neville and Clayton Taylor from Brisbane in the recently acquired Wizard Performance Jimco Pro class buggy finished eighth in a time of 4h30m58.23s. The Taylors were pleased with the Jimco and are looking forward to an improved performance at the next round now that they have an event "under their belts";

Geoff Pickering and Mark Henderson finished the event in a very impressive ninth outright and first in the Production 2WD class. Their Falken Tyres Mitsubishi Pajero performed faultlessly despite being driven to the limits by Pickering. Pickering said "The first section in the wet and mud was very challenging and we had a "few moments" due to a couple of "driver errors". However as the track dried and I got back in the groove, things improved and we pushed hard without any problems."

Local West Australians Mark Murray and Mark Fainetti in the Hoylake Transport Equipment Nissan Patrol finished tenth overall and first in the Extreme 4WD class.

The winners of the Production 2WD class were Harley Cooke and Gary Pendleton from South Australia in the Cooke Precast Concrete Ford Edge Ranger.

Nineteen of the fifty eight competitors completed all the sections of the event.

Whilst Adam Greg and Naomi Goddard in their Super 1650 class Southern Cross buggy did not complete all laps of the event they were the highest placed Super 1650. Having only taken delivery of the ex Luke Erceg Southern Cross on Thursday afternoon they were performing well until a fuel supply problem stopped them 2km into the start of the last section (two 48km laps of Smithy's Place). Greg and Goddard worked on the buggy at the side of the track for 50 minutes before being able to continue but were unable to commence the last lap as they would not have completed it within the allowed running time. Greg said "I am wrapped, this is my first off road event and we will go away from here and set up the Southern Cross to suit us, get in some testing miles and be regular Off Road Racers, I'm hooked".

The next and second of six rounds for the 2008 Australian Off Road Championship is the Donald 500 to be held at Donald in Victoria over the weekend of the 3rd and 4th of May.

Photos courtesy of Randal Kilner, DirtComp Magazine

Photos by Shane Rogers

