

Activ RallySport

Media Release

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BACK TO THE GRAVEL FOR ACTIV RALLYSport

Activ RallySport's Justin Dowel and Matt Lee will be hoping to build on their third placing in this year's Australian Rally Championship when the Quit Forest Rally gets under way on Friday night.

Dowel and Lee drove their Mitsubishi Lancer Evolution IX to a brilliant third outright on the championship's only tarmac round, Rally Tasmania, in February.

Buoyed by that result, they switch to the gravel of Western Australian this weekend full of confidence.

The Quit Forest Rally is based in Busselton, south of the state's capital, with the majority of the stages held around Nannup, to the south east of the coastal city.

Two days of storms and torrential downpours have made testing a challenging experience for the team, but has been beneficial nonetheless.

"The test area was a real mud pit," driver Justin Dowel said. "But the car is strong and we've been able to find, and rectify, a couple of faults with the car, so it's been a success."

This year's ARC has seen the introduction of a control tyre for the first time, with Kumho supplying the rubber for all cars. However, the wet conditions made it difficult for Activ RallySport to test the tyres to their potential.

"We tried both medium and hard compound tyres, but the poor conditions really prevented us from learning much about the Kumhos," Dowel added.

"We made some suspension 'bump' setting changes to the car, and despite the weather, we're happy heading into the event."

Last year's Forest Rally was one of mixed emotions for the team. Fourth place in Heat 1 proved the team had good pace on the slippery stages, but a big crash late in Heat 2 destroyed their Lancer.



"We had great pace here last year," co-driver Matt Lee said. "We had a good set of pacenotes, and we've further refined those prior to this year's event, so things are looking good.

"The aim for the weekend is a podium finish, as it was in Tasmania. We managed to accomplish our goal in Tassie, so we're very keen to back that up with another strong result this weekend."

Despite the wet conditions leading up to the rally, the weather forecasters are predicting mostly sunny conditions with temperatures in the mid- to high 20s over the weekend.

"We expect the roads to try out for a fine weekend, but there will be damp patches in amongst the trees and sheltered areas," Dowel said.

Dowel and Lee will start the event sixth on the road, giving them an ideal road position on the treacherously slippery ball bearing gravel roads that WA is famous for.

Their biggest rivals are again likely to be the Mitsubishi Lancers of Scott Pedder and Glen Raymond, and the Subaru of reigning champion Simon Evans. Darren Windus could be a wildcard in his rented Super 2000 Toyota Corolla, while others, such as Nathan Quinn and Roman Watkins, will be fast.

The Quit Forest Rally begins on Friday night with two tarmac super special stages around the Busselton foreshore. Heat 1 entails 10 stages with a competitive distance of nearly 103 kilometres competitive.

Heat 2 starts on Saturday night with another two runs around the Busselton foreshore, before eight more gravel stages around Nannup on Sunday.

ARC pointscore after Round 1 (provisional)

1. Scott Pedder 81
2. Simon Evans 64
3. Justin Dowel 52
4. Eli Evans 50
5. Mark Pedder 45
6. Ryan Smart 40
- =7. Glen Raymond 34
- =7. Steven Shephard 34
9. Charlie Drake 33
10. Bruce Fullerton 24

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