

Left: Paul Schlerbs (Vic) in his Suzuki

ROUND 3 - AUSTRALIAN FOUR WHEEL DRIVE MUD RACING CHAMPIONSHIPS

Doing it in the mud - big time!

by Martin Agatyn

The North-West Coast of Tasmania recently played host to the biggest four-wheel-drive event ever witnessed in the state when a crowd estimated by organisers at almost 6000 spectators flocked to the Latrobe Mudbowl.

The occasion was the third round of the Australian Four-Wheel-Drive Mud Racing Championships, hosted by the Devonport Four-Wheel-Drive Club at its Latrobe Mudbowl circuit, adjacent to the International Raceway.

While it was thought a round of the national championship could be a financial proposition for the club to stage, even the most optimistic of its members were simply overwhelmed with the massive response to the event.

Every possible vantage point was taken in perfect weather conditions, with the large crowd spurring competitors on to try a bit harder, sometimes with disastrous consequences.

An added incentive for spectators was that local boy and Tasmanian champion Scott Rockliff, from Sassafras (just down the road from the mudbowl) was leading the championship at the time after winning the first two rounds.

The field for the event was also a truly national championship field, unlike some forms of competition that often see the very top mainland competitors giving national championship rounds in Tasmania of their chosen sport a miss because they don't really need the points.

This wasn't the case with the mud racing, and the very best were right here in Tassie for all the locals to see and enjoy.

In addition to being championship leader and Tasmanian champion, Scott Rockliff is also the president of the Devonport 4WD Club, and was instrumental in organising the event and getting Tasmania allocated a round of the national title series.

Rockliff was typically modest about his involvement in the Tasmanian round, praising the efforts of fellow club members and his family for their invaluable assistance in actually staging and organising the event.

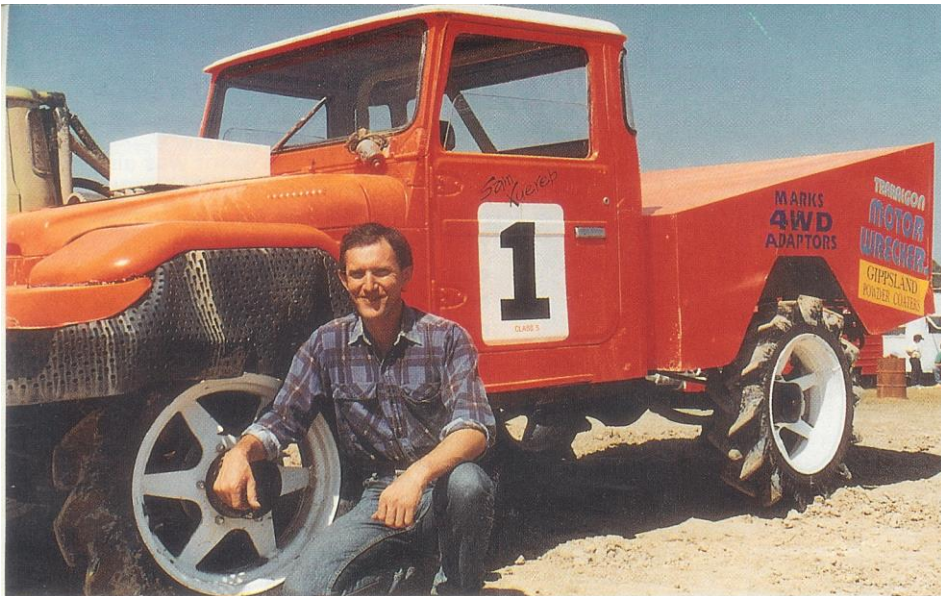
However, Rockliff said the response from the Tasmanian crowd had ensured Tasmania would again be allocated at least one round of next year's title series again.

He said the Devonport 4WD club had applied to host the round and was already planning improvements for spectators to making viewing easier, plus several track modifications to provide even more spectacular racing.

In addition, the club was also considering staging a major hill-climb event later this year, to which a number of top mainland competitors -



Scott Rockliff (Tasmania) with his Toyota "Mud Muncha"



Left: Sam Xuerub (Vic) with his Toyota

as far as eighth down the list at one stage.

Drawing last place in the run over the second heat, Rockliff needed a time better than 1:22.66 to qualify for the final – he did it by less than a second!

In the final, he was first out, but drove off the track on the second bend, costing him vital penalty seconds.

At the time of writing, Rockliff had performed well in subsequent rounds of the championship and was still strongly placed to win the title, with the final round set down in Victoria in late May.

RESULTS

CLASS 1 (up to 3.4 litres, registered)

1. Colin Brown (Tas.), Suzuki, 1:45.08.
2. Ross Edmunds (Tas.), Land Rover, 1:46.07.
3. Lindon Scott (Tas.), Toyota Hilux, 2:01.34.

CLASS 2 (over 3.4 litres, registered)

1. Frank Quillerat (Tas.), Toyota Landcruiser, 1:31.39.
2. Lyndon Kettle (Tas.), Toyota Hilux, 1:31.52.
3. Marcus Collis (Tas.), Toyota Landcruiser, 1:45.33.

CLASS 3 (under 2.8 litres, un-registered)

1. Peter Daniel (Vic.), Suzuki, 1:22.95.
2. Jason Jones (Vic.), Diahatsu, 1:23.02.
3. Rodney Lunson (Tas.), Suzuki, 1:41.04.

CLASS 4 (2.9 litres to 4.3 litres, un-registered)

1. Matthew Freeman (Tas.), Toyota, 1:15.45.
2. Len Marx (Vic.), Range Rover, 1:16.52.
3. Jeff Duckworth (Vic.), Toyota, 1:20.24.

CLASS 5 (4.3 litres and over, un-registered)

1. Sam Xuerub (Vic.), Toyota, 1:10.96.
2. Greg Southern (Vic.), Toyota, 1:13.58.
3. Scott Rockliff (Tas.), Toyota, 1:21.10.

including many who raced at Latrobe in the mud racing title round would be invited.

Australian 4WD Mud Racing Association president John Centra, of Sale (Vic.), said he was also pleasantly surprised by the attendance at the Latrobe round of the national mud racing titles.

Mr Centra backed Scott Rockliff's comments that the success would have a strong bearing on the allocation of further rounds of the Championship to Tasmania.

As for the results of the Latrobe round on the day, things didn't go as well for Rockliff on a personal level.

Rockliff only managed to finish third in the final for the premier division for class 5 vehicles (un-registered, 4.3 litre engine capacity and over).

The round was won by defending national champion Sam Xuerub, of Victoria, with fellow mainlander Greg Southern taking second place in the final ahead of Rockliff.

Rockliff was fortunate to make the final after his two heats, dropping



Above: It wasn't just the racing that was 'Hot' at the recent Mud Racing Championships.

Below: Part of the huge crowd.



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Above: Tony Quinn (Launceston) getting helped back in his wheels.

Right: Scott Rockliff (Tasmania) in his "Mud Muncha".



Left: Ian Cummins (Vic) in his Suzuki.

Right: Paul Mallon (Vic) in Plumloco.



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**DEVONPORT 4WD CLUB
ROUND 3, AUSTRALIAN MUD RACING CHAMPIONSHIPS
FEBRUARY 1995**

