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Los Angeles – The California Rally Series returned to northern Nevada for a two-day rally July 8 & 9, 2011. Twenty teams took the start of Friday's rally, which was run on smooth, twisty roads near Lovelock, NV. The rally began in the late afternoon and continued into the evening, running the final four stages in darkness. On Saturday, the teams ran faster, flowing stages near Gerlach, NV with the rally running from mid-morning to near dusk. Despite the smooth stages, only seven teams made it to the finish on Saturday, with mechanical problems and some off-road excursions claiming over half the field.

The open four-wheel drive class turned into a battle between the Subarus of Dick Rockrohr and Jon Burke. Rockrohr withdrew from Friday's event when hanging dust made driving conditions after dark especially dodgy. Burke and his co-driver Tucker Heiner continued on to claim top points in class for Friday's rally. Their luck would not continue on Saturday, as an off road excursion on stage two resulted in a bent control arm, and the team was forced to withdraw. It was smooth sailing for Rockrohr, however, who led the rally overall from start to finish on Saturday. With Saturday's win, Rockrohr bumps Burke out of the lead in the season standings.

George Doganis and Tom Smith were once again flying in their Honda Civic. The team finished on the overall podium both days, beating many turbo, four-wheel drive cars, despite being in the CRS-2 class for small displacement two wheel drive vehicles. Everyone anticipated close competition in the CRS-2 class between Doganis/Smith and the son and father team of Tim and Dick Moser, but the Moser's VW Golf blew its heater core on the fourth stage, spraying hot coolant on Dick and forcing the team to withdraw for the remaining evening stages. Javier Olivares and Brock Heinz picked up second place points in CRS-2 for Friday's event, but did not start Saturday's event due to a wheel bearing that was precariously close to failing. Meanwhile, the team of Chuck Wilson and Brent Ellzey had to park their Ford Escort after stage 6 on Friday with transmission problems and were unable to continue. Looking at the current class standings, North Nevada Rally organizer Michel Hoche-Mong moves into the class lead in the CRS-2 driver's championship with the help of his organizer points. Meanwhile, Doganis jumps up into second place, bumping Olivarez down to third. For co-drivers, Smith comes out of the weekend with the season points lead, knocking Heinz down to second place and Ellzey to third.

The production-based four-wheel drive CRS-GT saw close competition all weekend. The team of Kris-Jon Lyssand and Joshua Rodriguez traded stage times all night Friday with Alex Rademacher and Jeanna Yi. By the end of the last stage on Friday, only six seconds separated the teams in their Subarus, with the victory going to Lyssand/Rodriguez. Saturday's stages seemed to suit Rademacher/Yi better, and the team managed to build a lead of over a minute on Lyssand/Rodriguez going into the final stage. However, Lyssand/Rodriguez were pushing perhaps a bit too hard, and suffered a big roll when they went off the road into a wash on the

final stage. Katianna Pihakari went into the weekend with the points lead in CRS-GT. She teamed up with veteran co-driver Sean Gallagher and managed a third place finish in Friday's event. However, an off-road excursion left their Subaru high-centered on the second stage Saturday, causing them to DNF. Pihakari's finish on Friday was sufficient to maintain her class lead in the driver's championship, although Rademacher leapfrogged Lyssand to move into second. Yi earned enough points to top the co-drivers standings, with Rodriguez currently sitting in second place.

The next event on the calendar is the Mendocino Rally on August 6, based in Ukiah, CA. This rally is new to the CRS for 2011, and celebrates a return of rally to the region after an almost thirty year hiatus. The twisty, technical stages are contained within the South Cow Mountain off-road vehicle park, and feature a wide, hard packed dirt surface. Sixteen teams are currently entered, and competition is shaping up to be electrifying. With new, twisty stages and teams limited to route-book only instructions (no stage notes), expect driving and road-reading skills to trump experience and horsepower.

John Burke is the current open four-wheel drive class favorite, and will be looking to reclaim the points lead after relinquishing it in North Nevada. In CRS-2, Tim and Dick Moser will be back in their VW Golf, and looking for a problem-free rematch against George Doganis and Tom Smith. Javier Olivares and Brock Heinz are also on the entry list and will be there to keep these two teams honest. Alex Rademacher and Jeanna Yi are currently the only team entered in the CRS-GT class, giving Alex an opportunity to move into the class lead in the driver's champtionship.

The 2011 Mendocino Rally is based in Ukiah, CA and marks a return of rally to Northern California after a nearly thirty year hiatus. The rally features 54 miles of hard-packed twisty stages contained within the South Cow Mountain off-road vehicle park. For more information on the Mendocino Rally visit http://www.mendocinorally.com.

The California Rally Series is the premier performance rally championship in the southwestern United States. The Series incorporates events from various sanctioning bodies in order to create a meaningful regional championship for its members. The Series celebrates more than 35 continuous years of performance rally, making it the longest running rally series in the United States. To learn more about the California Rally Series visit www.californiarallyseries.com and follow @crspress on twitter.