

Rally RAV4 Finishes Second at 100 Acre Wood

Torrance, Calif., March 21, 2017— Driver Ryan Millen and co-driver Rhianon Gelsomino took the Rally RAV4 to the second step of the podium this past weekend at the Rally America Rally in 100 Acre Wood in Salem, Missouri. The finish was extraordinarily close, after 17 stages and nearly 2 hours of racing, the Rally RAV4 finished just 9.7 seconds behind the winners in their class, Seamus Burke and Martin Brady.

The 130 stage miles were extremely challenging, with twists and turns that mirrored the battle at every stage between Team Millen and Team Burke. While the RAV4 team went into the second day with a 15 second lead, but there were upsets that took that away.

“Friday was very fast and challenging for the crests and everything. Saturday was rockier with more height. It’s hard stone road here. Our position was so far up that we were sweeping the road. It was challenging.” said Millen. “If you go back and look at stage times, you can see how close the times are. It was a battle all the way through the rally.”

As is often the case, the unexpected is the norm in rally racing and not everything went off without a hitch for Team Millen. At one point, the Rally RAV4 suffered a tire puncture, costing the team precious time. In spite of the setback, the RAV4 maintained the lead at Stage 12, but then the engine ingested some water on the course, and it took its toll.

“That puncture cost us 10 seconds a mile for that stage. And the water slowed us down - you just have to keep driving until it clears. We learned some new things. And the RAV4 ran perfectly all weekend,” said Millen.

“Always being out in front, we had to shake a lot of gravel,” said Gelsomino. “Overall, it was a very productive race. We worked on a lot of new things with notes and building with the team. There are lots of positive takeaways.”

Last year the team was unable to finish the race, so they wanted to come back and conquer 100 Acre Wood.

“I don’t like to leave something undone and have it become a thing,” said Millen. “Finishing this race comes with a bit of redemption.”

Their third race together, the new pairing of Millen and Gelsomino is proving to be a good match. After a brief celebration, the team is already gearing up for their next challenge, the American Rally Association Oregon Trail Rally in Portland, OR, April 21 through April 23.

The Rally RAV4 is a mostly stock vehicle with a conventional six-speed automatic gear box. Recent subtle modifications added more camber from the control arms, allowing for even more grip in the turns, something that 100 Acre Wood demanded.

More information on the Rally RAV4 program can be found at www.RallyRAV4.com.

Information on American Rally Association can be found at www.americanrallyassociation.org.

Information on the Rally America series can be found www.Rally-America.com.