

Merritt hosts rally

It's the only B.C. stop on nine-race circuit

By Gordon McIntyre
Sports Reporter

Chad Manley's mom will finally get to see her 18-year-old son race.

"But she's a bit nervous," the Deep Cove native said Wednesday. "It's her first race watching me and I think she'll be closing her eyes."

Manley and 35 to 40 other rally drivers will take part in the Pacific Forest Rally on Friday and Saturday at Merritt.

That's racing

It's the fifth of nine races in the Canadian Rally Championship series and the only one in B.C.

Some, like Manley, operate on a shoestring.

"I started with a \$300 car [an '81 Toyota Celica hatchback known as The Roach]," said Manley, who according to the West Coast Rally Association is the youngest licensed rally driver in Canada.

By staying in the production classes, all Manley — a science student at Capilano College — has to pay for is safety equipment, like a roll cage, harness and seats.

"I try not to go too cheap on the safety stuff," he said.

"I save my pennies and do all the work myself, that's how a student can afford to do this.

"It's tough sometimes, but it's worth it. There's nothing more fun."

At the other end of the equation is Pat Richard, a North American rally champion and paid driver.

As a member of Subaru Canada's World Rally Championship team, the Vancouverite drives for the only North American-based team in the international series.

Richard, a transplanted Quebecer



— Province photo

Patrick Richard's Subaru in action in the World Rally Championship.

who started rallying as a hobby on the logging roads outside Whistler, caught people's attention right away with his driving style.

In his first sanctioned race, a navigation rally in which the idea is not to go fast but to reach each stage in a precise, prescribed time, Richard went off the road.

"You're not supposed to go off the road in a navigation rally," Bill Westhead, co-driver of a local rally team, pointed out.

Driving internationally while trying to defend his North American title keeps Richard hopping.

After Saturday's race wraps up around 8 p.m., he has to get to Van-

cover for an 11:50 red-eye to Toronto. Then it's on to Nicosia via London for a world championship rally on the island of Cyprus.

His other car is headed there right now, after being packed in a crate in Argentina, shipped to Europe and ferried to Cyprus.

"I've really got to boogie from the rally," said Richard, sporting a soft cast on the right wrist he'll need to have surgery on come August. He broke it in a pre-rally ride around a track in Sweden earlier this year.

"I've never competed in a stage rally in B.C. before," he said. "I'm really excited to be here."

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