

Getting Involved In Rallying

There are many ways to get involved in rally, anywhere from spectating and working an event to actually competing in an event. If you look on http://www.rally-america.com/info/info_index.html, you will find a lot of good information for spectating, working, and competing in an event. There are events all over the country and it is likely you will be able to find one near you. If you really want to compete, but for whatever reason you are unable to currently, there are many good reasons to get involved, even though you are not competing. For instance, spectating will give you a logistical idea of how rallies run and how much goes into planning a rally. Working an event will introduce you to the inner workings of a rally and to people who will become valuable allies and contacts once you begin to compete. Working an event is an important way to learn the sport and once you begin to compete, will make you a more well-rounded competitor. Workers are the life blood of the sport, and competitors would not be able to realize their dreams without the dedication of the workers; therefore, we highly recommend that you work events until you are able to compete, or even if you are competing, work events that you are not competing in.

Once you are ready to begin competing, we recommend that you buy a car that is already built and "log booked" for competition in Rally America events, we recommend a VW Golf, especially in light of the new ruling for provisional licenses in the Rally America rulebook. The reason that we recommend that you buy a car, as opposed to build one, is that it is already "log booked" (ie: already legal to race in Rally America events). If you were to build one, it would inevitably take longer and cost more money than you ever could plan for, and even if you read the rulebook to the letter, there is always the possibility that the way you built it may not be correct; therefore, costing you more money and time (and less seat time!) before you can actually compete in a rally. One reason that we recommend that you start in a VW Golf, is that there are a lot of them around, this is important for parts interchangeability and availability...inevitably, you will eventually need parts and it is nice to know that you can get them when you need them. Another reason that we recommend the Golf, is that it is front wheel drive and generally low horsepower... although not very exciting, it will cause you to become a better driver than say an all-wheel drive car or a high horsepower...essentially, learn how to drive well and then add the luxuries, which leads to the debate about driver training. Once you have spent your money on the car, the seats, the belts, the pieces, the parts, and you get ready to rally, if you do not have the most important entity of the team prepared, you are more likely to crash. Just about everyone that has rallied, has crashed at one time or another. No one wants to because it costs them money, lost seat time, etc., and the best way to try and avoid that is to train the driver. We consider it an investment.

A question that is asked frequently relates to sponsorship. Unfortunately, currently, there are very few large sponsors for rally teams in this country. There are many entities, headed foremost by Rally America, that are trying to change that; however, currently, as stated before, there are very few. With that said, unfortunately, it will be highly unlikely that a competitor will find a single sponsor to cover all of the teams costs. Until that changes (and we hope it will), we recommend that you try and find several, local, smaller sponsors that will each cover a portion of the team's costs, ie: a local tire dealer to give you a greatly reduced rate (or free tires), a local repair shop that will give you a greatly reduced price (or not charge) for fixing your car. These may not seem like much, but every little bit could help you realize your dreams. Due to the lack of large sponsors in this sport in this country, we certainly recommend, for our younger competitor hopefuls anyway, to stay in school (in an effort to find a higher paying job) and to find a job that will be able to fund your rally dreams.

In short, there are many ways to become involved in rally, however you choose to do it, doesn't matter, just get involved. You will learn the sport, meet great people, and have fun too. If you have any further questions, please let us know.