



Doug Chernis/Craig Macnair Overall –Day 1



Bill Holmes/Sean Gallagher Overall –Day 2

Desert Storm Rally 2009 Dueling in the Desert!!!

Well the question has been answered. Can anyone take away the rally sweep of a third win from Bill Holmes? Well, halfway! Doug Chernis beat Bill Holmes on Day One at the Desert Regional by one minute and 17 seconds with Jim Morris in his famous Camaro over a minute further back. Two Group 5 cars just behind an Open Class car...now that was some competition!

The day before the event; Desert Storm did its first time recce. It took all day for the competitors to get their stage notes done and ready for the event. At the same time quite a few competitors got a few notes about how to do recce from Scott Putnum. A national co-driver for Doug Havir, Lauchlin O'Sullivan, and the 2006 X Games 4th place winner with Lauchlin. Scott and Lauchlin won Desert Storm both days last year. He came out from Minnesota to help us out teach the class. We thank you Scott!

Later in the day we had "parc expose" at the annual City of Blythe Fire Department charity fundraiser. Every year they have their dinner at the same time we have the event. The community came out to see the cars, take pictures, and talk to the competitors. The competitors really enjoyed being honored at the dinner.

Day One was a hustle to get started but with no other Miss Blythe and Miss Teen to start them off at MTC. One Miss Teen is actually a road racer! So she really enjoyed starting the event the first day from the Lucas Oil Automotive Program race shop at the Palo Verde College in Blythe.

All of the service crews had a chance to watch live scoring back at service area and was just thrilled how all of the competitors were doing on their first day of competition. Some of the competitors remembered the old Desert Storm stages we finally got back having not having them for a few years. Thanks to Meg McDonald of Yuma Proving Grounds; we got them back! At first Jim Morris/Steve Palmieri was just behind Doug Chernis/Craig Macnair in second place off of Stage 1 with Marco Zapata/Francisco Arellano with Kevin Welker/Nolan Sambrano in the only Open Lite Class in the region not far behind. Bill was taken it easy on the truck since he did some damage to it from doing stunts for a TV show from the previous weekend. As time went on Bill was coming back to stay in second place all day but he knew Jim was back there with Marco, Kevin and Chris Palarmo.

When they came in for a quick service to change tires for the Super Special at the Lucas Oil 2 Lap Showdown; they were all ready to show their stuff at the I-10 speedway ¼ mile oval tarmac track. There were quite a few race fans there to watch the annual Test and Tune Bondelero and Legend Car series race. When Doug Chernis came on first he was just getting up to speed on his second lap and coming into the last turn he started doing a drifting stunt and the road racers were on the other side watching this and were cheering him on to keep going...but we made arrangements to do only 2 laps for this year. Then when Jim Morris came on for his run...well you can tell he is a road racer while he was hugging the turns (he won the super special) and Bill Holmes was skidding sideways like he was drifting as well. Marco Zapata, Kevin Welker, Chris Palermo, Chuck Wilson came on were turning as well their best times on the second laps and I might say were doing better than some of the modified cars would do on that track. Of course, Jeff Hendricks showed his truck off in style along with Jon Rea in his historic Datsun 510(historic plates on this car), Christopher Weleff with someone from the past who competed against Pat McMahan, Brian Paul as Christopher's co-driver. But we cannot forget the Colorado team who is doing the whole Southwest RallyCup series events –

Roger Matthews/Jack Penley. They were showing off some very colorful wheels there on the track! Unfortunately, John Black/Christine Marciniak, and Andrew and Robin Lockhart (brother/sister team) did not finish on the first day. But Christine went right back as a volunteer helping on the scoring team...what a trooper!

We had our first set of night stages for Desert Storm and the competitors really enjoyed being able to use their lights again at a event. Some saw a different prospective to the desert at night and all of them came in on some great times! It was a grueling first day but all but two got in and enjoyed some pizza back at the host hotel –Capital Suites-Blythe.

Saturday Results: Desert Regional

Doug Chernis/Craig Macnair	-1.04.15	1-Open
Bill Holmes/Sean Gallagher	-1.05.32	1-Group 5
Jim Morris/Steve Palmieri	-1.06.56	2-Group 5
Marco Zapata/Francisco Arellano	-1.07.56	1 - PGT
Kevin Welker/Nolan Sambrano	-1.11.51	1-Open Lite
Chris Palermo/Jeremy Fry	-1.15.32	1-Group 2
Chuck Wilson/Aaron Laeng	-1.15.35	2-Group 2
Jeff Hendricks/Kris Hendricks	-1.18.01	1-Prod
Jon Rea/Brent Ellzey	-1.19.12	3-Group 2
Christopher Weleff/Brian Paul	-1.19.40	2-PGT
Roger Matthews/Jack Penley	-1.22.21	4-Group 2
John Black/Christine Marciniak	DNF	– Tweek the frame
Andrew Lockhart/Robin Lockhart	DNF	– Engine Problems

Day 2:

Now the first day was the Arizona side, so today it was the California roads. They only had two stages today beside the final super special back at the college. They trailer their cars out to the Chocolate Mountain stage which was the longest transit of the whole event (also the longest stage of the event, a 26 mile stage.) Which quite a few competitors loved the idea so that there was no needless wear and tear on the cars. It was a much challenged stage for some and hers were glad they finished. Some went off on the same corner and they have been having some interesting discussion about how and why...which to Chris Palermo summed it up well; “ it was a combination of factors contributed, any one different would have seen everyone would have make it round the corner.”

So when they got back to do the final stage all of the service crews and some fans got to watch the race for the last time of the day. Bill Holmes stayed in first place all day with Jim Morris staying right there to take second place. Jeff Hendricks was very happy taking third overall. Doug Chernis barely finished the first stage, but he pressed on regardless, DNF right after that...

The awards ceremony was at the Lucas Oil Automotive Program shop at the Palo Verde College with an authentic Mexican Food buffet. We had our annual prize drawings for the volunteers and our silent auction for the SWRC Competitor Emergency Funds. We raised close to over \$100. Tom Nelson went home with a Peter Solberg WRC Subaru remote controlled car, others got in on the Travis Pastrana/Ken Block Subaru autographed shirts, as well as other items that people were hoping to win. So the final results came in for

Sunday Results –Storm Regional

Bill Holmes/Sean Gallagher	-31.45
Jim Morris/Steve Palmier	-31.58
Jeff Hendricks/Kris Hendricks	-35.38
Christopher Weloff/Brian Paul	-35.53
Kevin Welker/Nolan Sombrano	-36.16
Roger Matthews/Jack Penley	-37.30

Chris Palermo/Jeremy Fry -51.33
Doug Chernis/Craig Macnair -DNF
Marco Zapata/Francisco ArellanoDNF
Chuck Wilson/Aaron Laeng DNF
Jon Rea/Brent Ellzey DNF
John Black/Christine Marciniak DNF from previous day
Andrew Lockhart/Robin Lockhart DNF from previous day

The Rally America SW regional and Southwest RallyCup series will be going next to Rally Colorado in September. The next CRS event will be North Nevada Rally. In 2010, we have been told that Lucas Oil like for us to do a 5 lap run for each competitor. Palo Verde College has lots of ideas to make it even better for the competitors. Everyone loved the organizer notes so Mike and Paula will be back for 2010 to do the stage notes. So see you next year!

To check out for more information go to these rally websites: www.desertstormrally.com, www.rally-america.com, www.southwestrallyseries.com, www.californiarallyseries.com.

Article by the Southwest RallyGroup