

Team O'Neil Dominates 2WD Classes at 100 Acre Wood Rally

Team O'Neil Motorsports sends three Ford Fiesta Rally Cars into the 100 Acre Wood of Salem, Missouri. All three teams came out victorious in the second round of the 2016 Rally America National Championship with Dave Wallingford and co-driver, Leanne Junnila, leading the pack for Dave's first-ever overall 2WD victory.

Dalton, NH ([PRWEB](#)) April 04, 2016 -- In June of 2015, Dave Wallingford went to Team O'Neil Rally School looking for a good time, by the end of his five-day tuition, he left with a passion. "Dave was a great student. He was like a sponge and soaked up every piece of advice the entire instruction staff offered. The funny thing is - I don't think Dave even knew how to drive a manual transmission before Team O'Neil," explained Travis Hanson, Director of Training at Team O'Neil.

"Ha! Yes, it's true, I could not drive a manual before arriving at Team O'Neil, but their instructors had me shifting in about 10 or 15 minutes," said Dave Wallingford. "Travis and the rest of the instructors have really been fantastic. I took the 5 day class thinking it'd be a fun vacation, but by the end of the first day I was hooked! I couldn't be happier with both the training and motorsport support at Team O'Neil. They taught me how to drive, and now they allow me to concentrate on my driving at rallies by taking care of my car and all the behind the scenes work that would otherwise distract me."

Dave left his five days at Team O'Neil and started his search for a rally car. He came back to Team O'Neil to test cars and eventually purchased a used Ford Fiesta R2, the same car used by Brendon Reeves to win the 2013 Championship.

Dave used some of his newly acquired skills when his shifter broke on stage 2 at Rally in the 100 Acre Wood and he had to perform repairs in transit to continue. "It broke when I was trying to shift up to third, which forced me to drive fairly slowly on a fast stage. Slow enough that it gave me some time to go through the car's inventory in my head, and I remembered the spare tie rod I practiced changing during training. A bit of duct tape later, and I could shift. It only had to last a few stages until the next service, when my crew quickly replaced my MacGyvered fix with a freshly painted new shifter."

Dave overcame that adversity early in the Rally to find himself leading his first ever National Rally after the first day. Dave traded times back and forth with Steve LaRoza and his Team O'Neil prepared Ford Fiesta ST, all day on the Saturday Stages, but in the end Dave came out on top.

"I am so proud of Dave. He did an amazing job staying calm and collected while in the lead and he pulled out the win!" Travis exclaimed. "It really is amazing that Team O'Neil was able to work with Dave, a new guy to cars and motorsports, and in less than a year get him to win a national 2WD race overall. It takes people years to accomplish what Dave has figured out in months. What other rally school can do that?"

2015 Rookie of the year, Steve LaRoza and his daughter and Co-driver Alison, placed 2nd in 2WD. Keanna Erickson-Chang and Ole Holter climbed their way to 2nd place in the B-Spec Class in her third rally ever. Thirty teams started in National competition but only nineteen finished the rally, it was a tough course with a lot of crashes.

The team is now preparing to drive across the country to the Oregon Trail Rally in Portland, Oregon on April

26. The team will vigorously prep the cars for another grueling rally. The drivers will dry clean the champagne from their fire suits and start to review their notes from the 2015 Oregon Trail Rally. The Team O'Neil rally are ready to storm the podium, once again.

Team O'Neil Rally School has a history of producing North American Rally Champions. Many of Rally America's Rookie of the Years have trained at Team O'Neil before receiving their awards. Team O'Neil has directly supported five drivers and has five 2WD championships, not including all of Tim O'Neil's personal accolades. Over the past nineteen years, Team O'Neil has built a custom course with constantly evolving curriculum, giving them the capability to be the only rally training program in North America that produces Rally America champion competitors.

To find out more about Team O'Neil Rally School and Team O'Neil Motorsports, please visit their website (www.teamoneil.com) or call them at 603-444-4488.



Contact Information

Allan Guilbeault

TotalScope Marketing

<http://www.laclairguilbeault.com>

+1 (603) 968-5372

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