

Rhino Charge 2008 – TEAM 48



To All Sponsors

If you can spare a few minutes please have a read about the adventure of your Rhino Charge Team.

This year's Rhino Charge was set in an unbelievably beautiful area of Northern Kenya, Namunyak, home to the Samburu people where we spent five days & four nights.

Team 48 this year was made up of:

Mark – Driving
Bryn – Navigating
Johnny – Chief Runner
Steve – Winching & Runner
Piers – Mechanics & Runner
Gerard – Timekeeping & Runner

A truly awesome team with huge potential. Added to this we also managed to get hold of a Charge car from a retiring veteran who had won three times in the last few years. The team were also lucky to have Rob, Dave, Jimmy, Tones, Raine, Tara, Michela, Tom & the crew as great support & back up.

We drew the Copy Cat guard post to start at along with five other cars and headed off into the tangle of bush on our own – clockwise around the course on the dot of 7.30am.

The first section was reasonably straight forward except for the main fuel line being ripped off and arriving in the second control with one tyre down and off the rim. Having left the tyre with the organisers to fix, we then went into the first Tigerline (Tigerline being the most difficult sections) and were delighted to be joined by the official “pretty” camera lady, Abbey. “What a section to film” we managed to write off another tyre, had to winch, and claw our way through a Commiphora forest and down a precipice. We arrived into St Andrews control with a horrendous engine miss and later found out that we had won this “Tigerline”. Piers was then put to work sorting out the miss, which he soon found to be an air intake blockage!!! The second tyre was also left with the organisers

with instructions "please find a new tyre" - a tricky request 200km from the nearest tyre shop! The tyre eventually got into the capable hands of our service crew Rob & Dave who found a brand new tyre fitted it and got it back to us at KWS control later that day.

We then headed on into the 3rd section towards the Gauntlet with Mark nursing the miss as he had to do for the next 3 hours while the plugs burnt off the excess oil, and with no spare tyres!

Arriving at the Gauntlet we were delighted to see our support crew and then Johnny, Steve & Gerard did a superb job at finding us a quick route through the three controls. Our luck was also in as the two cars stuck in the route cleared out of our way. One of the Gauntlet sections of 50m between Braeburn & Goodyear was down a cliff with boulders that the previous cars had winched down and no car could realistically get over; Mark drove down as if he does it everyday. A truly phenomenal bit of driving.

The next three controls Land Rover, Brookhouse and KWS were good steady sections with the team working like clock work, and we managed to persuade Land Rover to lend us their spare tyre off their brand new display Land Rover!

Arriving at KWS we had caught up a lot of time and were now nearly back on track although this was to be short lived. We also met up with our support crew again who had the much appreciated brand new tyre & another spare!

We had the second "Tigerline" over a ridge ahead of us and were in a predicament as the info suggested that only two of the cars ahead had gone over the ridge, both were previous winners and many hours later still had not arrived at Satao, our next control. The rest had done a 10km detour round the hill. To add to this, leaves & bushes were wedged onto the exhaust and the car then caught fire. This was to be the first of many times and as you can imagine it was highly dramatic and entertaining as the team scrambled to get it under control. The decision was then made to head for the ridge and give it a go. Having run the ridge and tried winching up part of it Johnny as chief runner wisely made the decision to head round the hill. This decision meant we were able to possibly finish the event, where as if we had done the ridge like the winning team and taken two and a half hours to do it as they had then we would have been time barred and dropped down to 20th position overall. Good decision!!



So off we headed around the hill..... and had only two small issues one where the engine temperature was soaring and we had to stop and clean the screens which we only usually do at each control; secondly the windscreen got broken in two places. Luckily we met up with a road three quarters of the way round. Two hours behind schedule and with only an hour and a half to go and four controls left the pace had to change!

As is now renowned in the Rhino Charge the top teams that are running behind time start "cutting & running" mid afternoon in order to finish all the thirteen controls. There is no more straight lining just stick to the tracks watch the clock go like hell and hope for luck! This is with out a doubt the most dangerous part of the day as we now thundered "Paris Dakar" style along tracks with four loose fellows in the back hanging on for dear life and getting an absolute pounding. Not to mention that we also had a damaged steering box now. We roared in & out of Satao briefly catching up with our support crew again and headed on towards Southern Cross where we were able to get more fuel having now punctured our tank. Thank goodness for our support crew, as we would not have got to the end without the extra fuel! Here we again found out about another difficult leg ahead so decided to cut back upto Satao on the the tracks round a hill and then had to gamble on a two & a half kilometre section straight lining as there were no tracks. This was now going to be the make or break and luckily the car was running better than ever. The whole team was full of adrenalin and the terrain was kind to us.

As we roared into Hardi our second last control we knew we could finish within the time and there was huge excitement and relief. As we stopped, the car still managed to throw us a few more challenges with another flat tyre and catching fire again! The team dealt with these now insignificant issues unbelievably quickly and in less than two minutes we headed off on a track with our heads high.

We knew we could easily make it back to our starting control Copy Cat in the half an hour left and even managed to fit in some straight lining before ending the event with ten minutes in hand at 5.20pm, having done 72.43km. With huge roars and cheers form our support crew we cruised back into Copy Cat to cold beers, tall stories and great banter. It felt as if we had driven across Africa the hard way that day!

What an awesome day with a great team, car and support crew. That night we found out that we had done a team best!!

With:

9th in the Gauntlet

5th in the 2nd Tigerline

4th in the Victor Laudorum

2nd in the Modified Section

1st in the 1st Tigerline

And 2nd OVERALL!!.... the party carried on most of the night!

More importantly, thanks to you all we doubled the money we got last year, raising just over 2 million shillings helping the Rhino Ark reach their second year with a Million Dollars raised! None of the money we raised as TEAM 48 was used in entering or participating in the event, it has all gone to Rhino Ark

Thanks again and we look forward to having you on board next year where the lure of the ultimate result still beckons us!!!!

TEAM 48

If you would like to see more photos, please look at the following links:

<http://www.facebook.com/album.php?aid=39691&l=0a52b&id=600410809>

<http://www.facebook.com/album.php?aid=39684&l=9cfec&id=600410809>

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*All photos thanks to **Rob***