

The 2009 Trust House Racetech Rally Wairarapa was held over the weekend of 18 and 19 July and was the fourth round of the Vantage Aluminium Joinery New Zealand Rally Championship.

The weather forecast for the weekend wasn't looking good, but the rain held off with just the odd shower at times. During preparation for Rally Wairarapa I had the mindset that the roads were going to be very wet, muddy and slippery. During recce, Jeff Cress (my co-driver) and I had a good look at the roads; some shady places were very damp and slippery, but overall the roads were grouse. If you haven't seen the Wairarapa roads before, they are mainly public roads that are very narrow and twisty with road surfaces changing all the time.

On my way up north, I had a phone call to say that my Grandpa John Hunt passed away on our family farm on Thursday night. Obviously this was very upsetting and something that stayed with me. The fact that Dad still came travelled north with the team to service for me was truly awesome.

On Saturday morning I started off really well, and feeling very comfortable in the car and with the notes. We set some very good stage times that were competitive with the other Fiesta boys. From the first few stages I knew instantly that it was going to be a great battle all weekend. Unfortunately Patrick Malley lost his 11 second lead after clipping a bridge which moved me up into first Fiesta for the day. We slowly extended our lead throughout the day to claim a day win. In special stage 6 we lost the rear bumper after collecting a bank on a tight downhill section which gave all the boys a job to do at last service, with a lot of cable ties and 100 mph tape, the bumper was back on and ready for another days racing.

On Sunday all the Fiesta boys were pushing very hard with the lead swapping hands a few times. The gap between all the Fiestas never extended more than 17 seconds with everyone winning stages. It was such an awesome battle developing which, should lead to a good last round clash at the Nelson Rally on 19 and 20 of September.

I ended up with my debut victory in the Fiesta Sporting Trophy which was very rewarding for not only me but for everyone that has helped out throughout the season. It's a weekend I'll never forget and have dedicated the win to my granddad, which is pretty special.

I am really looking forward to the last two rallies for the season and the fierce battles to come.

I would just like to say a huge thanks to Rally New Zealand's Paul Mallard for coming to Wairarapa; it was good to have you at the rally. Kayne, cheers for an amazing car to drive and all your knowledge and hard work you put in; it's hugely appreciated. Neil, thanks for your mentoring and encouragement during the weekend. Also thanks heaps to Gavin, Paul and Dad for servicing for me; you guys are legends.

To my personal sponsors: Nelson Fork Trucks Ltd, Allan Kirby at MS Nelson Ford, Body Talk Nelson, Colin at Alpine Stars, P C Systems and Highfield Romney, thanks for coming along for the ride.

Also a huge thanks to my sponsors that are part of the Rally New Zealand Rising Stars Scholarship: NAC Insurance, Apparel by Design, Castrol, Network Visuals, Genuine Vehicle Imports, Dunlop, Rally Drive New Zealand and KBM (Kayne Barrie Motorsport) - cheers for all your support.

TV coverage for the 2009 Trust House Racetech Rally Wairarapa will be shown on TV1 Powerbuilt Tools Motorsport from 5-6pm with Day 1 shown on 26 July and Day 2 shown on 2 August.

Well, until next time, take it easy and you will be hearing from me before the Metalman Possum Bourne Memorial Rally in August.

Thanks

Ben Hunt
Hunt Motorsport Team

