

# RALLY NZ RISING STARS

## Jagger ready for Whangarei

Hello everyone,

The International Rally of Whangarei is here once again and it is the one rally I have really been looking forward to since our move to the Subaru, not just for the reason that it is my home rally.

This year's Whangarei Rally marks 'The Two Bens' fourth anniversary – back in 2007, Ben Hawkins and I were gearing up for our very first rally together in our little 1300 Suzuki Swift GTi. Not only was it our first rally together but it was my very first rally as a driver. Sadly, it didn't quite go to plan as I was introduced to the disappointing cruelties that rallying can sometimes bring.

While leading Class A (0-1300cc) we lost all drive when the gearbox let go on the last stage of day one. It was a long night replacing the gearbox, but we were going again for the second day, giving it our all on the best roads in New Zealand. Having had no previous rally experience, the atmosphere and the hype of this international event was quite exciting for me. To be competing against the best in New Zealand was really something else for my first time rallying.

Being my home rally, it's always the one that I look forward to the most in the season because it gives me the chance to compete in front of my home crowd including all my friends and family.

This year's event, in particular, will be well above the rest with Ben and I starting number ten on the road after receiving one of the four APRC wildcard entries. Starting much further up the field than we normally do and receiving the international TV coverage is going to be really beneficial to our team and sponsors.

The Seed Force Subaru has had a lot of maintenance done in between Rally New Zealand and this weekend's rally, including fixing up the little mishap we had on Day 2. Now the car's looking really good and has just spent four days down at the National Fielddays at Mystery Creek, near Hamilton, on display with our main sponsor Seed Force. Four very long days but well worth it as I'm always keen to talk about rallying and meet new people!

We're still busy tidying a couple of little things on the car before scrutineering, but I hope everyone's had a chance to get their spectator passes organised and decide which spectator points they're going to. We'll see you out there!

Cheers,  
Ben Jagger