## FRIDAY 20 APRIL 2007

## DISAPPOINTMENT @ TARGA AS TEAM WITHDRAWS





After cleaning the first three stages on Day 2 of Targa Tasmania Allan Simonsen and Ben Searcy's bid for victory on debut is over.

oz tarmac rally events targa tasmania evo-9

The pair fell victim to variable weather and road conditions on the ultra fast Weldborough Pass (SS13) whilst trying to stretch their outright lead.



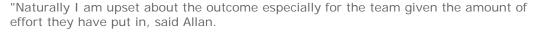
At 8.4km into the stage whilst being pushed by 2nd place John and Jason White in their all-wheel drive Lamborghini Gallardo, the Danish sportscar ace made contact with a dirt bank. Whilst the damage was not major it was enough to relegate the Home Loan Centre Australia Team to being 'also rans' for the remainder of the event. The decision to withdraw was then made.

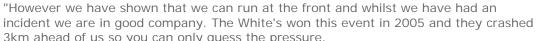


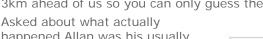
british GT ucb ferrari 430

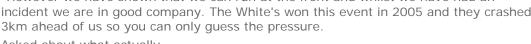
In a bizarre twist, the White's Gallardo would also fail to complete the stage after having a similar off road excursion.

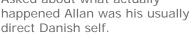
Both Simonsen and Searcy were naturally disappointed but were still upbeat about their efforts to date.

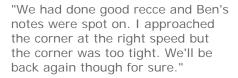












West Australian Ben Searcy was also philosophical about the situation.

"Look, we gave it our best and its just unlucky that this has happened but it's important to move on and also reflect on the success we've had this year with Rally Tasmania and Lake Mountain Tango.



Whilst damage was relatively minor the time lost meant that a challenge for the win was impossible.





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"If anyone had told me I'd have won those two events and would lead Targa with a European sports car driver who'd never driven a rally before I'd have thought they are mad. But Allan is very talented and his versatility is supreme. I can see that his diversity helps make him a better driver and lets face it as a professional you just

have to keep driving anything and everything. If you look back at the history of motor sport you'll find that the versatile drivers come up trumps every time. Just look at Jim Richards with his 7 Bathurst 1000 victories and 8 Targa's or Jim Clark back in the 60's who drove rallying, touring cars and Formula 1," Ben explained.

Targa Tasmania may be over for the HLCA Team but the future isn't far away with Lake Mountain Sprint in early May. Simonsen and Searcy will once again team to try to win the event for the second time this year.

"We both want to say thank you to Paul Carter from HLCA for his passion and vision that has helped us get this far and the entire team at Les Walkden rallying for giving us a sensational race car."



The biggest challenge had come from 2005 winners John & Jason White. Their rally also ended on the same stage as Simonsen a mere 3km later.



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