

The 2008 Mt Buller Sprint has been run and won with a very successful campaign by the number 23 entry of Stephen Bradford and Jenna Kelley in the HPF prepared 1999 Subaru Impreza STi finishing 8th outright. Having proven his status as a very competent driver following his win in the Targa Tasmania Rookie Rally last April, Stephen set his sights on the 16km hillclimb up the Mt Buller Tourist Rd in country Victoria and called on the services of successful Victorian Co-Driver Jenna Kelley to call the pace notes.

With an entry list of 55 cars, the team was going to have their work cut out up against cars worth a great deal more than Stephen's STi. Two Lamborghinis, a spattering of Porsches and a total of 25 Mitsubishi Evos and Subaru STis would provide the team with the stiff competition consistently provided at the Sprint. With the two Lambos being 2007 models and a majority of the Evos and STis being less than 6 years old, Stephen's 1999 STi was well behind in technology and design from the outset, not to mention the smaller power output of the relatively standard Subaru 2 Litre turbo.

Prologue for the event was run on Saturday afternoon to determine the starting order for Sunday, and most competitors completed 4 runs from the Horse Hill chairlift to the finish line in the main village. Stephen and Jenna's best time for the 1.5km prologue was a 1 minute 18 seconds, giving them the 11th fastest time and already showing some good speed. Come Sunday morning it was time for the main event and the chance for all 55 cars to tackle the 1000 meter climb in altitude from Mirimbah to the Alpine Ski Village.

Having tried a few different compounds of tyre over the course of the day and with Jenna coming through with a novel way to fix a dodgy intercooler spray (cue hooking up the windscreen washer to the spray nozzles) the team quickly got into a rhythm and finished the day with a fastest time of 9 minutes 11.89 seconds, already more than 3 seconds quicker than Stephen's fastest time up the mountain, set in 2007. This put them in 7th position in the overnight standings, and would provide all the incentive needed to improve their time and push for a higher position on the final day.

Monday would prove to be the team's best day of the weekend. With a few warm up runs in the morning and a break at lunch time, Stephen and Jenna put in 3 runs quicker than Sunday's best with consistency the key, as all 3 afternoon runs were within 0.75 seconds of each other, an amazing effort considering the 16km route and the 160 odd corners to deal with. Their fastest time for the weekend was a 9 minute 9.93 seconds on the very last stage of the day, bettering Stephen's PB by more than 5 seconds, and after dropping the worst run as allowed by the rules, the team completed 9 runs in a total time of 1 hour, 23 minutes and 13.28 seconds. This was enough to secure 8th position overall behind the first placed 2006 Mitsubishi Evo of Miedecke and Willson, the second placed 2006 Subaru STi Spec C of Longhurst and Taylor and the third placed 2007 Lamborghini Gallardo of Weeks and Crunkhorn.

Both Stephen and Jenna are extremely happy with the result considering the age of the car, the comparatively low power output and the event being their first time together as a team as well as giving Stephen a great boost ahead of his entry in the 2009 Targa Tasmania over 5 days in April. Stephen and Jenna would like to thank the HorsePower Factory for the preparation of the car and their sponsors, Tasman Checkpoint, TuSpeed, Exedy Clutches, Castrol and RaceRecall.