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Paul Elkund and Jeff Price hustled to finish first overall in both Oregon or Bust regional rally and the Trail's End Rally.

OREGON OR BUST

Oregon Trail Rally proves tough on competitors' cars

BY RON SOREM
Contributing editor

HILLSBORO, Ore. — The Oregon Rally Group and Rally America presented the 2007 version of last year's "Rally of the Year," Oregon Trail, a Rally America National, and three regional rallies: Wagon's Ho, Oregon or Bust and Trail's End.

Entrants faced varying venues from tarmac racing to gravel under the lights, with a grandstand view at Portland International Raceway (PIR), and winding forest stages west of Hillsboro, with a service park in Vernonia in the woodlands managed by Oregon Department of Forestry.

Seventy-seven teams signed up for the April 20-22 events. With a couple of last-minute withdrawals, 75 cars started the rally on Friday afternoon at PIR for Wagon's Ho.

Stages 1 and 3 were strictly racing, just short of a full lap on the track — down the long front straight, into a chicane, and long-right-into-long-left, into sharp-right-tightens and the tree-lined back-

stretch to Flying Finish. Stages 2 and 4 started on pavement, dove onto the perimeter road network of gravel, encountered a serious chicane at 1.51, with big obstacles and a water hazard, climbed parallel to the racetrack, but on a ridge above it, to Flying Finish near the park entrance. Stage 5 started mid-straight, eastbound, passed the grandstand into an on-track U-turn, then west down the drag strip, before diving onto the perimeter roads again. Departing from the SS2/4 route, onto the RV parking sod, onto the track, reverse-course through the sweepers and the chicane, to Flying Finish and the infield Parc Expose. Stage 6 was completely in view of the infield Motocross grandstands, as preparation for future Super Special Stages. Out and back at two-minute intervals, covering .95 miles of dirt, gravel, sod and tarmac.

Start order of the first four "seeded" entries was by draw (all Subaru Impreza). Pat Richard chose to go first on the road (Friday and Saturday) perhaps simply for the "psych" value, perhaps to have no distractions by broken hay bales

(as would every other car following him). Ken Block, Matt Iorio and Travis Pastrana would round out the draw.

Friday night retirements included the No. 20, Andrew Comrie-Picard and Marc Goldfarb, who had pushed their EVO 9 RS through the start as the 75th starter, gaining one championship point after losing a motor on the practice stages. After SS1, No. 199, Travis Pastrana and Bjorn Edstrom, lost their Subaru's engine; No. 30, the EVO of George Plsek and Jeff Burmeister, had an ECU failure. After SS2, the No. 90 EVO of Lauchlin O'Sullivan and Scott Putnam lost its motor, as did the No. 205 Todd Lengacher and Scott Kovalik Audi S1 (replica). After SS5, the No. 258 Honda of Kris Dahl and Ed Dahl was done. After SS6, three Subarus left: the No. 91 of Jonathan Bottoms and Carolyn Bosley; the No. 690 of Kenny Bartram and Dennis Hotson; and the No. 774 of Otis Dimitters and Alan Ockwell.

DAY TWO, OREGON OR BUST, began at the Hillsboro Stadium, Parc Expose. Max Vaysburd and I were there in