



## 1968 CAMS AUSTRALIAN RALLY CHAMPIONSHIP

### THE EVENTS

The 1968 CAMS Australian Rally Championship:

1	Classic Rally	Victoria	GMH Motoring Club	Kilfoyle/Rutherford
2	Snowy Rally	New South Wales	Australian Sporting Car Club	Ferguson/Johnson
3	Walkerville 500 Rally	South Australia	Walkerville All Cars Club	Firth/Hoinville
4	Canberra 500 Rally	ACT	Canberra Sporting Car Club	Keran/Meyer
5	Warana Rally	Queensland	Brisbane Sporting Car Club	Firth/Hoinville
6	Alpine Rally	Victoria	Light Car Club of Australia	Roberts/Osborne

### FINAL POINTS

1	Harry Firth	25.5		1	Graham Hoinville	25.5
2	Frank Kilfoyle	19.5		2	Peter Myer	19
3	John Keran	16		3	Doug Rutherford	16.5
4	Bob Watson	14		=4	Nigel Collier	14
5	Ian Vaughan	12		=4	Mike Osborne	14
6	Barry Ferguson	9		6	Dave Johnson	12

### CAMS Manufacturers Award

Not awarded



*The 1968 Championship winning Ford Cortina Lotus with Harry Firth and Graham Hoinville*

### SUMMARY

Australian rallying for 1968 constituted the hardest year of this branch of the sport any of the regular contestants had faced. Competition came from some twenty crews in superb vehicles – and those crews had some outstanding events in which to compete under the auspices of CAMS.

Firstly, there was the inaugural Australian Rally Championship (ARC); secondly the Southern Cross International Rally; thirdly, the London to Sydney Marathon, which clashed with the last round of the Championship.

The ARC was a series of six rallies conducted in four states, of which the best five scores counted for the final pointscore. First placed gained 9 points with the following five places earning 6, 4, 3, 2, 1, as was the common scoring system in circuit racing. This system was used until into the 1980s.

Timing was to the minute, with each minute later than the time allowed set by the organisers for each stage (then called a section) penalised at the rate of one point per minute or part thereof. If a crew were quicker than the time allowed they 'clean-sheeted' stage and receive neither a penalty nor any credit! Over the years timing to the quarter minute came into vogue (sometimes penalised at one minute per quarter minute or part thereof .and other times at quarter minute per quarter minute). Gradually, timing to the second with a penalty of one second per second over the time allowed was adopted and then times allowed were dropped altogether on special stages and the penalty was the time taken. But that was far into the future.

Daylight running was exceptional and in fact if competition was running behind schedule and competitors had to compete in daylight the stages were cancelled. Gradually, some daylight stages were permitted, particularly under the guise for spectators and then daylight stages became the norm, necessitating the course to be 'sealed' so that the public did not travel on it. Again, this was well into the future in 1968.

Australia's population was 11,500,000 in 1968 so there were many open areas where rallying could be conducted and there was little movement by the population at night, although this was quickly changing with the rapid increase of the motor vehicle population.

Most events were conducted on public roads and in 1968 there were very few permissions to be obtained and organisers could run events wherever they chose, although this was rapidly changing and indeed, in New South Wales there was virtually no rallying in 1969 whilst an agreement on the use of shire roads was being worked out between CAMS and the NSW Shires Association. This forced a swing into the use of forest roads.

The National Rally Code came into being in 1967 and formed the basis for the ARC competition.

Barry Ferguson sat out the Championship to concentrate on the New South Wales title, so only ran in the two New South Wales based events (Snowy Rally and Canberra 500 Rally). Harry Firth, John Keran and Max Winkless, who featured in the four ARC events didn't do the last round due to being absent on the London to Sydney Marathon.

#### Vehicle Eligibility

Vehicle eligibility was based on CAMS Group C – Australian Touring Cars

#### Championship Point-scoring

1<sup>st</sup> = 9, 2<sup>nd</sup> = 6, 3<sup>rd</sup> = 4, 4<sup>th</sup> = 3, 5<sup>th</sup> = 2, 6<sup>th</sup> = 1

### ROUND 1: CLASSIC RALLY - Victoria

Frank Kilfoyle/Doug Rutherford (Ford Cortina GT) ran away from the rest of the outstanding field to head teammates Harry Firth/Graham Hoinville in the first ever Australian Rally Championship event – the Classic Rally, conducted for the GMH Motoring Club by Bob Watson and Jim McAuliffe. Their direction was a masterpiece of thorough organisation with perfect route charts, correct times, capable officials and roads to suit any driver who wanted to be thoroughly tested. As an event to set the tone for a National Rally Championship it is doubtful that any could be better. The 'Classic' was aptly named and attracted 47 competitors, with 10 retiring during the night.



*Frank Kilfoyle/Doug Rutherford take out the inaugural ARC round, driving the Ford Cortina GT 1600*

Following the two Cortinas were three Volvos crewed by Bob Holden/Lindsay Adcock (142), John Keran/Peter Meyer (122) and Max Winkless/Nigel Collier (122). Then came Bruce Collier/Steve Halloran (Renault 8 Gordini), Evan Green/George Shephard (Morris Mini S), Richard Harris/John Bryson (Ford Cortina 1500), Barry Ferguson/Dave Johnson (Volkswagen 1600) and to round off the top ten, Ken Harper/Bob Forsyth (Ford Cortina GT).

For those who wanted a 'drivers' rally the Classic was one indeed. Centred on the forest town of Noojee, east of Melbourne, the route involved three loops to make up over 600 kilometres. The loops were named the Pink, the Blue and the Yellow. Cars separated from the central out-control with car starting the Pink loop, Car 2 the Blue and car 3 the

Yellow, thus cutting out the dust problem and gave a six minute gap between cars. It worked well, provided no-one had an accident that required urgent assistance.

The roads twisted and turned liked coiled springs and some navigators spent the night suffering from mild to severe car sickness. But it was superb rally country with no chance of public traffic. A central control in Noojee kept the unfolding picture of the rally before the competitors all night.

Kilfoyle was just that half minute or minute better than the other drivers, this being reflected in his 18 point win at the finish. His only real rival was Evan Green in the Mini S until it suffered from fuel feed problems – in one 15 minute holdup Green and Shephard cleaned a handful of woolly mush from the fuel lines. The other likely winning Mini driver, Roger Bonhomme, ended up with gear selector problems.

So, Frank Kilfoyle and Doug Rutherford took off the very first Australian Rally Championship, with a decisive lead from Harry Firth/Graham Hoinville (25 to 43 points), followed closely by Bob Holden/Lindsay Adcock (46) and John Keran/Peter Meyer (49).

1	Frank Kilfoyle	Doug Rutherford	Ford Cortina GT 1600	25 ¼ pts
2	Harry Firth	Graham Hoinville	Ford Cortina Lotus	43 ½
3	Bob Holden	Lindsay Adcock	Volvo 142S	46
4	John Keran	Peter Myer	Volvo 122S	49
5	Max Winkless	Nigel Collier	Volvo 122S	54 ¼
6	Bruce Collier	Steve Halloran	Renault R8 Gordini	59 ¾
7	Evan Green	George Shephard	Morris Mini S	60 ¼
8	Richard Harris	John Bryson	Ford Cortina 1500	64
9	Barry Ferguson	Dave Johnson	Volkswagen 1600	66
10	Ken Harper	Bob Forsyth	Ford Cortina GT	67 ¼

#### ROUND 2: SNOWY RALLY – New South Wales 1

Forty-five competitors entered the Snowy Rally, drawing elite crews from four states. The event started from Bankstown Square (Sydney) and the crews rallied to south of Nowra to begin 1500 kilometres of exciting driving. Division One was over five stages to Batemans Bay, which were relatively simple, allowing John Keran/Peter Meyer (Volvo 122S) to lead by two minutes.

Division Two gave everyone plenty of action on the run to the day rest break at Merimbula where Barry Ferguson/Dave Johnson (Volkswagen 1600) lead the field with 46 points lost, followed by John Gerard/Barry Waldron (Holden 186S) 60, Greg Gerard/Nigel Collier (Holden 186S) 64, Richard Harris/John Bryson (Ford Cortina 440) 71 and Peter Houghton/Mick Neilsen (Peugeot 404) on 76 – all New South Wales crews. By this time five crews had retired.



*Barry Ferguson/Dave Johnson in the Volkswagen 1600*

Sunday night's division from Merimbula to Cooma saw reasonable loss of time on the stages with Keran shining to only lose 10 points, followed by Frank Kilfoyle/Doug Rutherford (Ford Cortina GT) on 11, with Harry Firth/Graham Hoinville (Ford Cortina Lotus), Evan Green/George Shephard (Mini S) on 12. Harris dropped 42 points when a McPherson strut bent but he eventually got the Cortina going again with amazing camber on the offside front wheel, travelling at a much reduced speed.



There was snow and ice on the last division and a few of the leaders retired including John Keran who hit a rock and bent a wishbone badly. By mid-morning Monday the crews were streaming into Canberra.

The event was not without controversy over the accuracy of the route charts and there were numerous protests at the end, although the Stewards only upheld one.

Barry Ferguson/Dave Johnson emerged the winners with 85 points lost, followed by the Gerard brothers in their Holden 186S – Greg with 95 points and John on 99. Bruce Collier/Steve Halloran (Renault Gordini R8) were fourth on 102, Colin Bond/Brian Hope (Mitsubishi Colt) 120 and the last championship points-earner was Bob Watson/Jim McAuliffe (Holden HK) on 122.

1	Barry Ferguson	Dave Johnson	Volkswagen 1600	85 pts
2	Greg Garard	Nigel Collier	Holden 186S	95
3	John Garard	Brian Waldron	Holden 186S	99
4	Bruce Collier	Steve Halloran	Renault R8 Gordini	102
5	Colin Bond	Brian Hope	Mitsubishi Colt	120
6	Bob Watson	Jim McAuliffe	Holden HK V8	122
7	Peter Houghton	Mike Neilsen	Peugeot 404	124
8	Harry Firth	Graham Hoinville	Ford Cortina Lotus	129
9	Ron Marshall	Ian Butcher	Volvo 122S	131
10	Richard Harris	John Bryson	Fort Cortina 1500	186

### ROUND THREE: WALKERVILLE 500 –South Australia

Under the worst road conditions for years Harry Firth/Graham Hoinville (Ford Cortina Lotus) took a narrow lead in the South Australian round of the championship. The conditions provided heavy rains in the early stages, strong winds, sand, fog and extremely boggy roads. The event comprised three divisions. Some 86 cars started, with about half vying for the championship.



*Harry 'The Fox' Firth and Graham Hoinville in the Ford Cortina Lotus*

By the end of the first division at Clare, 11 cars had withdrawn, most bogged hopelessly. Included in the withdrawals were the Volvo crews of Max Winkless/Nigel Collier and John Keran/Peter Meyer. The former burnt out his gearbox and the latter the clutch. Despite the conditions, and thanks to easy times allowed, Bob Watson/Jim McAuliffe (Holden HK V8) had clean-sheeted, followed by Ron Waite/Jim Newby (Toyota Corolla) on 4, Firth on 10, Ian Vaughan/Bob Forsyth (Ford Cortina GT) 18, John Gerard/Brian Waldron (Holden 186S) 27, Adrian Callary/Garry Chapman (Honda S800) 29 and Stewart McLeod/Jack Lock (Alfa Romeo Giulia) on 39 (after having ran out of fuel and securing supply from a nearby farm).

The second division brought disastrous point losses to many crews as many, including Evan Green, were forced to cut and run to stay within the late time whilst avoiding the bogs. Firth tangled with a length of fencing wire strewn across the road and lost 10 minutes, and McLeod again had fuel problems, this time with the feed from the Alfa's tanks to the engine, costing him valuable time. The points tally back at Clare showed Firth first with 42 points lost, Watson now in second on 45, McLeod managing third on 46, Callary 74 and Waite with 93.

The last division was relatively straight-forward and little time was lost by the leaders.

So, the championship points went to Firth (9), Watson (6), McLeod (4), Callary (3), Vaughan (2) and John Cossich/D. Wilson (Volkswagen) (1).

1	Harry Firth	Graham Hoinville	Lotus Cortina Lotus	45 pts
2	Bob Watson	Jim McAuliffe	Holden HK V8	48
3	Stewart McLeod	Jack Lock	Alfa Romeo Guilias	54
4	Adrian Callary	Garry Chapman	Honda S800	86
5	Ian Vaughan	Bob Forsyth	Ford Cortina GT	96
6	John Cossich	D. Wilson	Volkswagen	112
7	Frank Kilfoyle	Doug Rutherford	Ford Cortina GT	135
8	Ron Marshall	Ian Butcher	Volvo 122S	182

#### ROUND FOUR: CANBERRA 500 RALLY – New South Wales 2

32 crews entered the Canberra, 18 finished. Although well organised and conducted the organisers let in a supplementary regulation that body damage be penalised – which had been tried before and didn't work. This resulted in protests, which marred the event, which was conducted in August after being postponed from March due to drought conditions.

The night of the rally it was blowing a gale and the roads were narrow, roughish and include quite a few boggy patches. A flying branch hit and damaged a panel on the Volvo 122S of John Keran/Peter Meyer and they incurred a penalty of 10 points extra to the 37 minutes they lost on the event. However, they retained the lead from Max Winkless/Nigel Collier (Volvo 122S) (51) and Tony Roberts/Mike Osborne (63) (Holden 186S). Roberts was second behind Keran at the start of the last stage and landed 20 points penalty for panel damage as he 'gave it go' to try to catch Keran.



*John Keran/Peter Meyer in the Volvo 142S*

The first division circled east of Canberra and the quickest was Keran's 4, Harry Firth/Graham Hoinville (Lotus Cortina) and Winkless on 6, and Roberts on 7. Most of the time lost was on a boggy section which put several crews out of the running, including Richard Harris/John Bryson (Ford Cortina GT).

At the mealbreak Frank Kilfoyle's Cortina's gearbox had packed it in and Stewart McLeod's Alfa Romeo Guilias had motor problems.

Division two was much the same as division one, with the places staying the same as at the end of division one but with Firth dropping back to fourth. Colin Bond/Brian Hope (Mitsubishi Colt) were lying fourth equal with Roberts when Bond overshot a turn and when reversing a bank collapsed and the Colt had a slow slide into a ditch where it sat for an hour or so. On this second division Keran lost 21, Roberts 26, Winkless 32 and Firth 35. Barry Ferguson/Dave Johnson (Volkswagen 1600) came home in fifth and Ian Vaughan/Bob Forsyth (Ford Cortina GT) sixth.

1	John Keran	Peter Myer	Volvo 142S	47 pts
2	Max Winkless	Nigel Collier	Volvo 142S	51
3	Tony Roberts	Mike Osborne	Holden 186S	63
4	Harry Firth	Graham Hoinville	Ford Cortina Lotus	67
5	Barry Ferguson	Dave Johnson	Volkswagen 1600	77
6	Ian Vaughan	Bob Forsyth	Ford Cortina GT	79
7	John Gerard	Barry Waldron	Holden 186S	83
8	Evan Green	George Shepheard	Morris Mini S	89
9	Bob Watson	Jim McAuliffe	Holden HK	108
10	Peter Houghton	Mike Neilsen	Peugeot 404	119



*Greg Garard/Roy Denny in the new 5-litre Holden Monaro GTS*

**ROUND FIVE: WARANA RALLY - Queensland**

28 crews of the 74 starters in the Warana Rally nominated for the Championship. Ford made a raid north with Harry Firth/Graham Hoinville in the Cortina Lotus and Frank Kilfoyle/Doug Rutherford in the Cortina GT – and they tied for first place, just wedging John Keran/Peter Myer in the Volvo 142S into third, one point down on the Ford pair.

The event headed south into the upper regions of New South Wales for a short section, with most of the competitive sections cleanable. However, Greg Garard from the ACT lost quite a number of points with front-end problems with the Holden Monaro and, as such, lost all opportunity of a good placing in the new car. One section, near Warwick was a 40 kilometre section through a swampy area which involved no less than ten gates and seven creek crossings but all the leading crews clean-sheeted. Rex Lunn, with Peter Hass in a Holden Torana retired soon after. Then, just before the break at Toowoomba, all but three cars lost times on a section – those to remain without loss were Allan Lawson (Renault Gordini), John Keran (Volvo 142S) and Tony Roberts (Holden HK V8). Harry Firth dropped one point.

Just after the restart from Toowoomba, Lawson's Gordini's water pump failed and Ken Tubman (with lighting problems with his Hillman) towed him back to Toowoomba. Then Greg Marriot in a Toyota Corona failed to take one of the numerous hairpin bends and he speared off the road between two giant forest trees.

On the loop back to Toowoomba John Keran, clean-sheeting, took the lead when Tony Roberts lost four minutes on an easy transport section, and Firth, still one point down, moved up to second place. Bob Watson/Jim McAuliffe followed in a Holden HK V8 with two points and Frank Kilfoyle with three.

After a break at Toowoomba, the last division started and Keran lost one point, as did Firth, on the first competitive, while Kilfoyle was clean. The competition then became serious, with seven sections through the D'Águilar Range forests, near Dayboro, 50 kilometres northwest of Brisbane. On the first of these, an uphill run of 24 kilometres with grids, gates and water crossings, Keran lost a point while Firth cleaned, making them level on first.

The Cortinas were well suited to the terrain and all three – Firth, Kilfoyle and Ian Vaughan/Bob Forsyth – clean-sheeted most of the following stages and Keran dropped one point, to be equal second with Kilfoyle, giving Firth the lead. Still on forest roads, Firth and Keran dropped another point while Kilfoyle clean-sheeted. Then came the final section which brought the leading three closer together. Both Firth and Kilfoyle lost two points each and Keran dropped only one to give the leaderboard equally to Firth and Kilfoyle on 5 points, with Keran third on 6 points. Vaughan had been pushing the Cortina hard and finished fourth on 10 points.

=1	Harry Firth	Graham Hoinville	Lotus Cortina Lotus	5 pts
=1	Frank Kilfoyle	Doug Rutherford	Ford Cortina GT	5
3	John Keran	Peter Myer	Volvo 142S	6
4	Ian Vaughan	Bob Forsyth	Ford Cortina GT	10
5	Bob Watson	Jim McAuliffe	Holden HK V8	13
6	Tony Roberts	Mike Osborne	Holden HK V8	28
7	Bruce Collier	Steve Halloran	Renault Gordini	34
8	Mike Chapman	P. Hines	Holden	36
9	Max Winkless	Nigel Collier	Volvo 142S	38
10	J. Connell	J. Well	Holden HR	41



With one round to go and Harry Firth to miss the last round due to being overseas competing in the London to Sydney Marathon, the pointscore was Firth 25 ½, Frank Kilfoyle 18 ½ .

## ROUND SIX: ALPINE RALLY

Harry Firth did not compete in the Alpine Rally as he was enroute to the United Kingdom to start in the 1968 London to Sydney Marathon. Frank Kilfoyle needed nine points to clinch the championship title but could only manage fourth in the Alpine Rally (worth three points, based on the 9, 6, 5, 4, 3, 2, 1 points system) and finished second in the inaugural Australian Rally Championship. A number of other championship crews, including John Keran and Max Winkless, also made the journey to London.

Run in late November, Tony Roberts, with Mike Osborne in a Holden Torana GTR, won the Alpine Rally for the third successive year. Attracting a very low 22 entries, the event started in Melbourne outside the Light Car Club of Australia and headed west to Bairnsdale, then north to Omeo, and after a loop back through Bairnsdale to a televised finish at Phillip Island.



*The Alpine Rally winning Holden Torana with Tony Roberts/Mike Osborne  
It was Roberts' third successive Alpine Rally*

Generally, although timing was to the quarter minute, the times allowed for the stages were achievable and only a few stages caused the crews any real problems.

Most interest in the event revolved around Frank Kilfoyle, who had Peter Meyer navigating for him in the Ford Cortina GT due to Keran's absence on the London to Sydney Marathon, to see if he would win the event and the nine points he needed to take off the championship. But his opportunity vanished near Omeo when most of the Cortina's fuel defied gravity and remained jammed in the supplementary fuel tank. Sucking and siphoning the crew lost 13 minutes at one point and another three shortly after before the problem was overcome. They finished fourth outright in the event, and Kilfoyle was second to Firth in the championship.

So, the first Australian Rally Championship ended after six rounds in four states with Harry Firth declared Australian Rally Champion Driver and Graham Hoinville the Australian Rally Champion Navigator. Second in the series was Frank Kilfoyle and Peter Meyer, third was John Keran and Doug Rutherford, followed by Bob Watson and Nigel Collier, Ian Vaughan and Mike Osborne and sixth were Barry Ferguson and Dave Johnson – the latter crew only entered the two New South Wales rounds.

1	Tony Roberts	Mike Osborne	Holden Torana GTR	8 ½ pts
2	Dave Forster	Jeff Beaumont	Holden HR	16 ¾
3	Mal McPherson	Robin Sharpley	Renault R8 Gordini	21 ½
4	Frank Kilfoyle	Peter Myer	Ford Cortina GT	22 ¼
5	Reg Lunn	Peter Haas	Holden HK	32 ½
6	Bob McInnes	Tony Swanson	Morris Cooper S	41 ¼