

TEAM GUMBALL STI

By Richard Burton

Our team is in it's second year in rallying. Months of planning and preparation went into our 2005 Subaru Gumball STI race car. We had worked with Cosworth engineers and Four Star motorsports installing three different custom turbos before getting the optimal turbo and engine setup. This pre-Targa work, along with countless hours of performance and handling changes, had been completed and the car was taken out to track days at Shannonville and Mosport to work out the kinks.

The Gumball STI race car was seemingly bulletproof and we felt confident that we could handle whatever situations the grueling Targa event could throw at us. We were wrong! With the race now over and reflecting back on this year's Targa event I must say upfront that our Subaru STI was very fast. We consistently set many stage speed records with times that even beat the pro factory teams. Our crew worked tirelessly and kept us in the race.

Unfortunately, our Achilles heel was a

flex coupler that let go early in the race and resulted in many other collateral breakdowns that surfaced throughout the remainder of the week. However, we ran the car no matter what challenge we faced. At one stage our engine was on fire, another stage was run with no steering, we suffered a broken transmission, broken tyrod, no clutch, manual steering, blown shocks, no turbo and lastly no a/c. But we loved every minute!

In the unlimited class, our main competition was the Audi Group B car driven by Frank Sprongl. Frank launched off the line fiercely at 8000rpm with all four tires smoking intensely. He went on to win the class.

On the last day, our team was forced to run without a functional steering rack, among other things. Unfortunately this made Brigus an impossible stage for us and we ended up finishing the week third place overall for the class.

In the modern class, Andrew Comrie Picard (ACP) won the class in a brand new Mitsubishi Lancer Evo. This car was put together in a few weeks so he could com-

pete in the Targa event after flipping and crashing his previous Evo rally car in the Top 8 at X Games 2008. Meanwhile, in the classic division, Roy Hopkins in a 1969 BMW successfully defended his 2007 division and overall win.

Our team had fun regardless of the week's challenges and enjoyed meeting thousands of race fans and working with other teams who helped keep us motivated and pushing forward. The cross-team support is a little-seen aspect of this motorsports adventure and it really makes Targa Newfoundland a "can't miss" event. Many teams, including Subaru, Pacione Motorsports, Valley Tire and Audi offered our team assistance and much needed parts that would have been impossible to find elsewhere in Newfoundland.

A big 'thank you' should also go out to the welcoming communities, kind Newfoundland people, always helpful event organizers and volunteer staff who help make Targa a very special annual event. ♦

For more details, check out our blog link @ www.gumballsti.com www.gumballsti.com

