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SUBARU TAKES FIRST WIN AND SCORES DOUBLE PODIUM AT OJIBWE FORESTS RALLY

Akeley, Minn., Aug 31, 2020 - Subaru Motorsports USA and Travis Pastrana brought home the team's first win of 2020 at Minnesota's Ojibwe Forests Rally, the third round of the shortened American Rally Association (ARA) season. Pastrana led wire-to-wire for his sixth career Ojibwe victory and first overall rally win since clinching the inaugural ARA driver's title on these stages in 2017. Teammate Brandon Semenuk showed strong pace and picked up his first U.S. stage wins on the way to third-place finish, his second straight podium in the WRX STI.

As the first full two-day event on the ARA calendar since the beginning of the COVID-19 crisis, Ojibwe Forests Rally offered Travis Pastrana an opportunity to return to form after an engine fire ended his 2020 debut at July's one-night Southern Ohio Forest Rally. The five-time national champion came to Friday's stages armed with a brand-new #199 WRX STI and a new co-driver in Rhianon Gelsomino. The pair gapped the field by 23 seconds on the opening stage and took a follow-up win on SS2 to build an early lead, although rival Barry McKenna would take back time over the next four stages to tighten Pastrana's lead to 20 seconds by the end of Day One.

Brandon Semenuk and John Hall in the #180 WRX STI drew first on the road for Friday's stages and were forced to contend with both the loose road surface and a tire puncture in the opening three-stage loop. The Canadian duo fought back, finding better grip in the second loop to retake third place by the end of the day and keep within striking distance of McKenna.

Saturday brought another early charge from Pastrana, with the Maryland native winning the opening three stages to extend his lead to nearly 40 seconds by midday. Pastrana adopted a conservative strategy in the afternoon to protect his lead, while Semenuk continued to push in pursuit of McKenna, building confidence and taking outright stage wins on stages 11 and 12 before a second puncture on SS13 relegated him to a solid third-place finish.

"It's great to be back on the top spot," said Pastrana after his win. "I love Ojibwe and it's always been an event where I've done well! Subaru and Vermont SportsCar pushed so hard to get a new car ready after the fire at Ohio and it ran great all week, plus Rhianon and I really worked to get our notes in a good place. We're still on the back foot for the championship fight but this was a win we really needed to get our season jump-started."

"Very stoked to get my second straight podium finish this weekend!" Semenuk said. "These stages were really fun, lots of jumps and pretty fast, especially if you can commit in the soft sand. I feel more familiar with the car now and it's becoming easier to be fast in it. Travis and Barry were both super quick this weekend so I was happy to be able to mix it up with them on some of the stages, and it really feels like John and I have momentum heading into the rest of the

year.”

Subaru Motorsports USA will be back on the stages October 2-3 at Missouri's Show-Me Rally before wrapping up the season at Olympus Rally in November.

About Subaru Motorsports USA

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