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Subaru Driver David Higgins Extends Rally America Championship Points Lead With Second Place Finish At The 2012 Rally In The 100 Acre Wood

Salem, MO, Feb 23, 2012 - Subaru Rally Team USA driver David Higgins, the defending Rally America National Champion, has significantly extended his 2012 championship points lead with a second place finish at The Rally in the 100 Acre Wood. Higgins' two primary season-long rivals failed to finish the event thus providing even more impact to Higgins' second place points-haul. The Rally in the 100 Acre Wood, round two of the 2012 Rally America National Championship included over 100 miles of extremely fast and flowing gravel roads that traversed the foothills of Missouri's Ozark Mountains. Higgins, joined by co-driver Craig Drew, competed in a BFGoodrich Tires-shod 2012 Subaru WRX STI rally car.

Higgins began the event with a three-way duel with Antoine L'Estage, his archrival in the Rally America Championship, and Ken Block, a five-time winner of the 100 Acre Wood Rally. The trio was separated by just seconds after running the first three stages when L'Estage exited the rally with a mechanical problem, leaving just Block and Higgins in a fierce battle at the front of the field. Dry conditions meant this year's edition of the 100 Acre Wood Rally was an extremely dusty affair, and Higgins was slowed considerably by hanging dust as the winds dissipated on the evening stages. Higgins ended the first day of competition 18 seconds adrift of Block.

With Higgins' chief championship rival L'Estage out of the event and mindful that Block is not committed to running the full Rally America Championship, Higgins took the measured approach to find a balance between catching Block and driving prudently enough to ensure a solid finish which would net valuable championship points towards retaining the title. Higgins capitalized on a tire puncture that Block suffered on day-two and was able to close the gap to briefly take over the lead. The rival drivers were separated by just over 12 seconds heading into the final two evening stages of the rally. A final push by Higgins wasn't possible though, as Higgins, running behind Block on the road, encountered Block's hanging dust and was forced to slow considerably and eventually accepted a solid second place overall finish.

"The pace here was just amazing," explained Higgins. "It was a great battle and ultimately I'd like to have been able to win but Ken [Block] is very fast here, and it simply became a matter of safety to push too much in the dust. However, this result is huge for our championship defense since Antoine [L'Estage] and Leo [Urlichich] didn't finish. We now have a very good cushion atop the standings and our Subaru will excel on the more technical gravel roads in the upcoming events."

Added James Han, motorsports marketing manager for Subaru of America, Inc., "David and [co-driver] Craig [Drew] confirmed the pace capable from our Subaru WRX STI and drove a smart rally to consolidate our championship points

position under very challenging driving conditions. Both David and Ken [Block] put on an incredible performance for spectators this weekend.”

Higgins and Subaru Rally Team USA head next to the Oregon Trail Rally, May 4-6, 2012 based in Portland, Oregon.

About Subaru Rally Team USA

Subaru Rally Team USA is managed by Vermont SportsCar and proudly supported by Subaru of America, Inc., Subaru Tecnica International (STI), Subaru Performance Tuning (SPT), BFGoodrich Tires, RECARO, PIAA, Motul, and VP Racing Fuels. For more information on Subaru Rally Team USA, as well as exclusive photo and video galleries, visit subaru.com/rally and for the latest news follow the team on Twitter: twitter.com/srtusa.

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Subaru of America, Inc. is a wholly owned subsidiary of Fuji Heavy Industries Ltd. of Japan. Headquartered in Cherry Hill, N.J., the company markets and distributes Subaru Symmetrical All-Wheel Drive vehicles, parts and accessories through a network of more than 600 dealers across the United States. All Subaru products are manufactured in zero-landfill production plants and Subaru of Indiana Automotive Inc. is the only U.S. automobile production plant to be designated a backyard wildlife habitat by the National Wildlife Federation. For additional information visit www.subaru.com.

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