



OFF-ROAD SPORT

ARB Warn Outback Challenge 2008

DECADE DECIDER

Outback Challenge's 50 entrants, ANTHONY MCDONALD says

Carnage, crashes and crushed spirits were all in a day's work for the 10th ARB Warn



PICS: OFFROAD IMAGES/ANTHONY MCDONALD



More than 50 competitors from around the world

It was clear early on: the 2008 ARB Warn Outback Challenge was going to be tough. On the first day, around twenty winch cables snapped, two vehicles rolled onto their roofs and there were a number of component breakages. And, they hadn't even left Broken Hill!

Workshops all over Broken Hill were full of battered cars, awaiting repair in time for the next day's competition. Paul Vanderhorst, competition director, couldn't hide his delight: "It's our tenth year and the competitors said they wanted a tough one. Well, I think they might live to regret their taunts!"

Australia's most celebrated and grueling off-road event had come of age in just one day's competition, proving why it remains "THE" event in which to test off-roading skills against the toughest terrain in Australia.

Regular competitor Greg Scanlon, of ARB Bendigo, couldn't have put it better: "It doesn't matter how well you prepare your truck, this event just keeps throwing up curve balls that take you by surprise – and keeps you running on your wits 24/7 for more than a week."



Jeep Wrangler cops a severe mud bath

The 10th ARB Warn Outback Challenge would be the toughest





Kym Bolton and Robert Marks dive into the mud



Scanlon and navigator Robbie Calvert retired from the event mid-way through with terminal gearbox failure. This year, 10 overseas teams made the long journey down from countries including Venezuela, Poland, South Africa and the United Kingdom.

South Africans Warner Trimmer and Chris Ingram brought their modified three-door Prado, with Gen 3 5.3-litre V8. Their run came to an abrupt end when they spun a big-end bearing in the mud stages held at Viewmont Station on the banks of the Darling River. But, when all seemed lost, a new donk was located in Melbourne. It found its way to Broken

Hill and into their Prado. The boys finished an astonishing ninth outright. Meanwhile, in the sand stage at Denian Station, the wreckage kept coming with Alan Mai and Warren Cleland flipping their vehicle end-over-end. They retired with only bruised spirits. The Polish team suffered the same fate in their Trophy Class Suzuki Jimmy. Cresting a blind dune at night, in a car not quite used to its surroundings and a driver even less used to the conditions, they went end-over-end, but finished shiny-side up and made it to the finish to a standing ovation.

Over at Poolamacca Station, Rohan

Teams came from Venezuela, Poland, South Africa and the UK

FROM CAPE TOWN TO CARNAGE

Warner Trimmer and Chris Ingram showed what spirit was all about when, in the middle of a bog hole, they suffered a catastrophe. A loss of oil pressure saw a big-end bearing fail. A few phone calls later and a new 6.0-litre V8 was on its way from Melbourne 12 hours later.

The boys worked non-stop fitting the engine at Silver City 4WD. They eventually finished ninth in the Challenge. Meanwhile, the well prepared truck of

Terrance Reinders and Jacques Viljoen had its share of problems. They finished seventh outright with their cabin held onto the body with tie down straps. In the Trophy class, second place went to Cape Town lads Dennis Mayton and Dave Ratcliffe.

The fourth team from South Africa, Peter Sherlock and Ted Separovic, sadly spent more time in Broken Hill with electrical gremlins than out on the track.



Trophy winners Peter and Jane von Pein



This was the toughest event many competitors had encountered



Canavan and Wayne Smith's Challenge came to an ignominious end less than 200m after the start of the night navigation stage.

Navigation stages were held at each of the event sites, all within 200km of Broken Hill, with both Poolamacca and Nundooka receiving the highest praise.

Kym Bolton – who has contested every Outback Challenge to date – described the courses as “the toughest he’d ever encountered”. He and navigator Robbie Marks fell foul of the terrain at Poolamacca, when their engine expired, leaving them stranded on the course.

The podium oozed with testosterone as

the winners accepted their accolades and the crowd responded with cheers and good wishes.

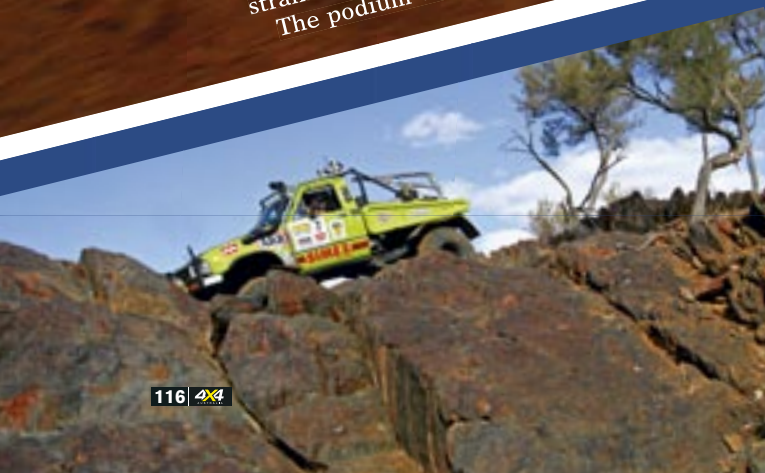
The party unravelled into one of the biggest yarn-spinning competitions of all time, with teams regaling anyone who would listen with tales of the “most air”, the “biggest endo” or the “craziest thing I’ve ever seen”.

Among the revelling was the wry smile on Paul Vanderhorst's face: “Told 'em I'd make it tougher!”

According to many of the competitors, the 2008 ARB Warn Challenge may have been the toughest yet, but it was also by far the best. **4x4**



Bill Tsaousis and Wally Shorney tackle a rocky climb



OUTRIGHT RESULTS

1	Adrian Parker/Alan McGilvray	Patrol	2079
2	Todd Robards/Ivan Vella	Patrol	1902
3	Neil Cooper/Chris Hummer	HiLux	1898
4	Peter Mihailoff/Andrew Cassar	Patrol	1733
5	Darren Green/Stephen Hudson	Patrol	1723

TROPHY RESULTS

1	Peter von Pein/Jane von Pein	Patrol	1417
2	Dennis Maytom/Dave Ratcliffe	Patrol	1262
3	Tony Bright/John Clemens	Patrol	999
4	Celia Barry/Eugene Barry	Maverick	932
5	Gary Rayment/Paul Creten	Range Rover	353