



Tommi's advance

***Mäkinen wins
on home soil, but
the death of a
spectator casts
a cloud over
the downgraded
Finnish classic***

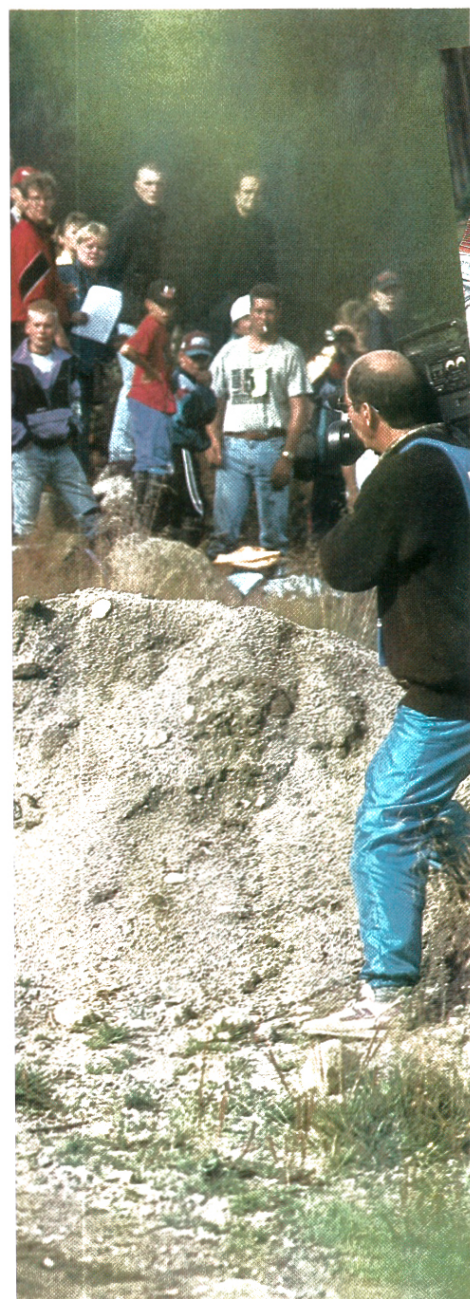
Without full World Championship status this year, and attracting no more than a casual interest from the major teams who operate four-wheel-drive cars, the Neste 1000 Lakes Rally was considered by many in Finland to have degenerated into a local derby. Indeed, only two drivers stood out as potential overall winners. They were both in powerful 4wd cars and both hailed from the area around Jyväskylä, the Central Finnish city where the rally has always been based.

Tommi Mäkinen and Seppo Harjanne, last year's winners in an Escort Cosworth, were in one of the latest Lancer versions entered by Mitsubishi Finland, whilst Juha Kankkunen managed to persuade Toyota to let him field a works Celica GT-Four which he entered himself with Nicky Grist as co-driver. A similar car was entered by Team Toyota Castrol Finland for Jouni Ahvenlammi and Teppo Lainio whilst a somewhat older version was driven by Finns Marcus Grönholm and Timo Rautiainen.

Mäkinen's two team-mate crews in slightly older versions of the Mitsubishi Lancer were Jouko Puhaka/Keijo Eerola and Olli Harkki/Kari Mustalahti. Group N Lancers were entered privately by Mika Korhonen/Launo Heinonen and Marko Ipatti/Harri Kiesi.

Sebastian Lindholm and Timo Hantunen drove an Escort RS Cosworth for Ford Team Finland, whilst Bruno Thiry made the trip with a similar car to drive it as a route opening car, both for component testing and to get to know the stages. Esa Saarenpää and Lasse Hirvijärvi drove a privately entered Audi Coupé S2.

Among the 2wd runners, three Nissan Sunny GTis were entered by Nissan F2 for Alistair McRae/David Senior, Grégoire de Mevius/Jean-Marc Fortin and Ari Mökkönen/Juha Repo. The Opel Sweden team sent an Astra GSi for Per Svan and Johan Olsson, whilst similar cars were driven by Jarmo Kytölehto/Arto Kapanen and Harri Rovander/Risto Pietiläinen.



Tommi Mäkinen simply cruised home on an event which naturally attracted little interest from the works 4wd teams.

examples of the latter, driven privately by German crews Frank/Mario Ficker and Bernd Knotte/Carsten Wiegand.

A few British privateers made the trip, David Stewart/Brian Wileman in a Mazda 323 GT-R, Trevor Goodwin/David Wyer and Robert and Michael Plant in Mini Coopers and Adam Kent/Clive Jenkins in a Peugeot 106. There was also a British co-driver, Duncan McNiven, partnering Finnish driver Kari Savolainen in a Mitsubishi Lancer. Goodwin and Wyer finished.

Jyväskylä has been the home of the Thousand Lakes Rally since it began in 1951 as the Jyväskylän Suurajot, later to become known as the Rally of the Thousand Lakes. More recently, the name was shortened to 1000 Lakes Rally. The route has invariably been contained within central Finland, although it has ventured as far southwards as Tampere and even eastwards almost to the Russian border. Nowadays it follows a cloverleaf pattern, returning to its base for each of the two night stops.

FIA rules prohibit substantial route changes year by year by organisers of events in the full World Championship. However, the organisers made use of the loss of that status for this year to introduce several changes, including four completely new special stages and others which had been significantly altered. Indeed, one well-known stage was run in the opposite direction this year, completely changing its character.

Headquarters of the rally were, as usual, at the Rantasipi Hotel, a large, modern place in the wooded suburb of Laajavuori a couple of miles from the city centre. The ramp for start and finish was right outside the hotel main entrance, and the closed park set up in part of the car park area. Scrutiny, however, took place at a sports centre in the city. Jyväskylä is several hours away from Helsinki by road in severely speed-restricted Finland, but only 25 minutes away by one of the frequent internal flights. The rally has a permanent office at the hotel, a far cry from the desk in a jeweller's workshop above a shop in the main street back in the '60s. That jeweller, Matti Jaatinen, one of the rally's early chairmen, eventually became first an MP and then a provincial governor.

The tail-end of August is also the tail-end of summer in Finland and the weather can provide anything from warm sunshine to torrential downpours, fog and high winds.

This year the sky was mostly overcast and there was heavy rain at times, especially on the second day. Rain also fell during the reconnaissance period, although without doing too much damage to the road surfaces.

Finland's forest roads and many public roads in the countryside are mostly of dirt surfaces, but well founded and impacted. This is to avoid the substantial cost of tarmac surface repair each spring after frost damage has caused the surfaces to ripple. It is on such roads that the special stages are laid out, some wide with fast, flowing bends; some narrow and much more tortuous.

All the roads have one thing in common; they all have a large number of blind crests over which cars being driven at competitive speed invariably leave the ground and jump. This is a legacy of the practice of road-makers of old to take roads over brows and into dips to avoid the expense of excavating cuttings and building embankments.

Surfaces are smooth, but the trackside ditches and banks contain tree stumps, stones and often large rocks. These, plus the violent pounding of landings after jumps, make the event one of the hardest on suspension parts in the world and he would be a fool indeed who would take a car to the 1000 Lakes Rally without ensuring that its suspension is beefed up as much as possible. Similarly, one has to be very wary indeed, even after taking quick looks on foot during recce, of cutting across corners lest one should fall foul of a rock hidden in the grass.

There was no stage around the fearsome ski-jump tower at Laajavuori this year, its start having been just a few hundred yards from the start of the rally itself. Instead, competitors had to drive westward to Kuohu where a five-miler had been laid out. It was on this very first stage that all the steam went out of the rally, at least for those hoping to see a fight between the front-running 4wd cars.

Kankkunen clipped a rock and the front left wheel promptly folded under the car. The rock was by no means a big one and Kankkunen was amazed that such a slight encounter could cause such damage. Later, however, Toyota engineers confirmed that faulty (or, rather, unfinished) material had been used to make suspension bolts, one of which had snapped as a result of the blow. Grönholm hit the same rock but did nothing like as much damage, although his wheel alignment was affected.

Kankkunen was bitterly disappointed at going out too early, but Mäkinen seemed to be even more so. He said that he would have been happy to put up with a delay so that Kankkunen could have his car repaired prior to a complete restart. The suggestion was made with tongue in cheek, of course, but he was certainly upset by the sudden removal of his opposition. From then on he was able to drive at less than 100 per cent but nevertheless he kept his lead to the end, extending it as the rally progressed. His winning margin was more than nine and a half minutes, positively huge by 1000 Lakes standards.

On the second stage de Mevius spun, went

The Seat Sport team came from Spain with two Ibiza GTis for Erwin Weber/Manfred Hiemer and Antonio Rius/Manuel Casanova. Skoda Motorsport had two Felicias for their regular crews Pavel Siberia/Petr Gross and Emil Triner Pavel Stanc.

A Renault Clio Williams was taken from Sweden by Jonas Kruse and Anders Dawidson, joining a Finnish crew in a similar car, Kari Isolehto and Arto Sirpöm. Tapio Laukkanen and Risto Mannisenmäki were in a Volkswagen Golf GTi, whilst Teemu Tahko, whose wife was for some years the full-time secretary of the rally, drove a similar car.

Despite what has happened in the former Soviet Union, a works team continues to make the trip to Finland, under the name Autovaz. There were two Lada Samaras driven by Aleksander Artemenko/Viktor Timkovskij and Sergei Aljasov/Vladlen Ishimov.

Works Wartburgs and Trabants no longer make appearances, but there were two



off and just about destroyed the rear of his Sunny against a telegraph pole. There was no question of his continuing and from that moment the Nissan team were in fear of irreparable damage being done to another of their cars because they had to get cars ready for the forthcoming Manx Rally, and they only had one spare bodysell in their store! McRae certainly had a responsibility from then on and one can't help feeling that he may have been slowed just a little by the need to take no chances.

Lindholm stopped to add water after his engine began overheating, but the treatment was to no avail and the engine's cylinder head gasket soon blew. Tahko's rally came to an abrupt end when his engine seized, as did that of Pasi Hagström's Toyota one stage later.

Svan punctured his left rear tyre, Rius needed a broken front halfshaft replaced and Kytölehto needed constant shock absorber attention as he strived to get the settings to his liking.

McRae's need to avoid going off was rendered easier when a misfire caused a severe power loss. This was traced to the cam department and it was fixed by resorting to the grinding wheel at the road-

side, a tricky job indeed.

Möckkönen badly damaged his front left wheel in a ditch, but was helped out by spectators and continued. Mäkinen changed his rear shock absorbers but was also concerned about his front spoiler which was broken on the right side causing such a disturbed airflow that it was difficult to stop the nose becoming too high over jumps.

Olli Harkki suffered brake failure and retired after going off the road. Puhakka, who had been leading the Group N category, went out after rolling his Mitsubishi. The carnage was certainly widespread, but some people were really enjoying it. Weber, for instance, grinned broadly and exclaimed, "Now I know what I have been missing."

Laukkanen needed much body hammering, and a new windscreen, after rolling his Volkswagen. Later, he had even more cause to regret the incident because his replacement screen did not have a heating element and he became troubled by misting.

Grönholm collected a front left puncture but did not stop to change the wheel until after the end-of-stage control. Kytölehto also punctured but continued on the flat all the way to his service point.

By the time cars got through the short (20 minutes) stop at Kaukkala, Mäkinen had had his front spoiler fixed, whilst Kankkunen's broken suspension had been put right with a new batch of bolts being used. He'd got the permission of the organisers to use his car as an extra course car, bearing number 02, and this is what he did.

Juha Kangas had the cracked gearbox casing of his Mitsubishi repaired with sili-

cone adhesive whilst Mäkinen needed new front brake discs. Grönholm was very happy to learn that the Toyota team was prepared to let him use tyres which Kankkunen would no longer be needing, but later he was hampered by the failure of his intercom and had to do a stage and a half without it.

Lady driver Eija Jurvanen lost the rear differential oil from her Escort Cosworth when the casing cracked. The unit could not be replaced until the end of the leg so she was out of the rally. On the last stage but one of the leg, Mika Korhonen was really troubled when oil sprayed on to his windscreen after the dipstick came loose. He had been leading Group N, but this mishap dropped him from third to sixth overall. Laukkanen was also held up by the slow Mitsubishi.

On the last stage of the day, at Harju in the centre of Jyväskylä, partly on tarmac and partly on dirt, Grönholm overshot a hairpin whilst Korhonen lost his brakes and went straight through a tyre barrier into the escape road. He continued using only his handbrake.

At the end of the leg Mäkinen, who again had brake discs replaced, led by the large margin of 2m 5s from Grönholm and Rovannerä. Kytölehto was another 5m 29s behind and Svan another eight seconds.

The next morning rain was falling steadily, often worsening into downpours, and some stages had become affected by standing water. Mäkinen's front spoiler broke again, whilst Rämänen had the misfortune to have the windscreen wipers fail on his Volkswagen. Rovannerä lost about a minute when his engine ran on only three cylinders for a while. Grönholm needed a broken rear driveshaft joint gaiter replaced after the first stage.



Alister McRae (top) was a praiseworthy fifth for Nissan. Jarmo Kytölehto (above) took a best-ever third.

On the second stage of the day there was an incident which saddened everyone and reduced Thiry to tears. As he drove his course car over a blind crest in heavy rain, he saw a group of spectators ahead, walking in the road away from him, umbrellas raised. He braked, swerved and sounded his horn and they scattered but, even though he went off the road in an effort to avoid them, he was unable to miss one of them, a young lady. An ambulance helicopter quickly arrived and took her to hospital, but sadly she died later.

Thiry was unhurt but in very bad mental shape. He spent nearly all day at a police station making statements but later he left. That evening he appeared on television, obviously distressed, but everyone realised that the incident was absolutely not his fault. His Escort was a Group N version, but one of its silencer boxes had been removed so that it would make more noise and be less likely to take spectators by surprise.

That special stage having been cancelled, the next one was number 17, second of the day, where there was much standing water. Goodwin broke a wheel in a ditch, his Mini Cooper then being lifted bodily by spectators so that the wheel could be changed without using the jack. Earlier, his intercom had failed. Korhonen again had his screen

sprayed by oil from the dipstick tube, whilst Dutchman Hans Stacey went out when he lost a wheel and hub from his Mitsubishi.

Ipatti again got stuck behind Korhonen for a while but nevertheless moved up to lead Group N. Rius hit the fence of a wooden bridge, having discovered that planks can become very slippery indeed in the rain. He got to the end of the stage with a flat front left tyre, some body damage and a bumper which was dragging along the ground.

Mäkinen took new front brake discs yet again, plus a new rear suspension arm. McRae suffered a bad misfire and had just about everything electrical changed. The fault was cured, but at the time they had not discovered which changed part had been responsible.

Rovanperä had his wipers stop working for a while; most disconcerting in the heavy rain. He was relieved when they suddenly started to function again. Laukkanen came to the end of SS21 with the interior of the car full of what seemed to be smoke. At first it was said that a fire extinguisher had gone off in the car, but it seems that his Opel's heater matrix had burst, filling the car with hot water and vapour. He was lucky not to have any damage caused by overheating.

Mäkinen had his front halfshafts changed

shortly after the spectator stage and short regrouping stop in the city of Valkeakoski, whilst Grönholm later spun and lost some 20 seconds. Eero Ruokonen put his Opel Manta off the road in SS23 and there was a 30-minute delay whilst an ambulance helicopter went in to take co-driver Kai Meri-virta to hospital. He had an injured arm.

After a service stop at Jämsä, with four stages to go to the end of the leg, Rovanperä lost his brakes after hitting a stone and breaking a slave cylinder. He had to tackle the next stage with just the handbrake as there was no service between the two stages. It was later put right when the whole caliper was changed.

There was a short spectator stage outside Jämsä and it was here that Rius ran into a barrier of tyres and broke his headlights. Soon after, Grönholm went into a ditch, kept going in the hope that the car would pull itself out, but eventually stopped. Spectators immediately rallied to drag the car out, but some three minutes had been lost.

Two more casualties before the end of the leg were Rovanperä and Savolainen. The former went out when his engine seized and the latter when he put his Lancer off into a field and got so deeply stuck that it could only be recovered when



Colin McRae's run of wins came to an end in Malaysia, though he remained in championship contention

For two countries so close together, separated only by the narrow ribbon of water known as the Strait of Malacca, Indonesia and Malaysia have international rallies which are vastly different. True that the terrain and the weather are similar, but the style and efficiency of running are not at all so. July's Indonesia Rally was slick and

well run by a bunch of organisers who are prepared to listen attentively to outside advice, and act upon it. In Malaysia, such counsel seems to fall on ears deafened by a desire not to admit to any shortcomings.

Matters such as an indifferent roadbook which is not consistent throughout and special stages which are far from being

closed to other traffic are just two points which are seriously in need of improvement. The result is an event for which the prominent teams have little liking but are obliged to take part due to policy dictates of their far eastern parent companies.

Subaru has an excellent record in the Asia Pacific Championship and, indeed, began 1995 with a fine win by McRae in Indonesia. But Mitsubishi took second and third places and was very closely poised to move up in the series ratings.

In Malaysia, seven of the first 10 finishers were in Mitsubishi, and even one of the remaining three was a Proton Wira, which is actually a badge-engineered Mitsubishi.

The main teams were those of Subaru and Mitsubishi, the former having Imprezas for Colin McRae/Derek Ringer and Possum Bourne/Tony Sircombe. Mitsubishi Lancer E3s were driven by Kenneth Eriksson/Staffan Parmander and Tommi Mäkinen/Seppo Harjanne.

Prior to the Malaysia Rally, Subaru was comfortably leading with 70 points to Mitsubishi's 47. Two rallies later, the tables are turned and Mitsubishi heads the list of makes with 82 points to Subaru's 77.

Outright winners were Eriksson and Parmander, followed closely by team-mates Mäkinen/Harjanne. Third place went to local men Karamjit Singh and Ron Teoh in a Proton Wira.

There were just 250 miles or so of special stages, but some were very much on the rough side and those who had not recced found themselves slowed on two counts; first having to preserve their cars and second having to make sure they did not take wrong turnings.

The first stage was a short tarmac test in Kuala Lumpur. McRae was fastest here but,

later a tractor was brought out. Mäkinen's only problem at that stage was an intercom squeak caused by dampness getting into the system. Much water was getting into the car.

After service on the edge of Killerijärvi, a recreational lake just a few miles from Laajavuori, cars began arriving at the Rantasiipi from 10.34 pm onwards. Crews went straight to sleep, but mechanics had their vehicles to replenish in readiness for the 6.30 am restart.

By then, Mäkinen had extended his lead over Grönholm to 8m 5s. Kytölehto came next another 8m 34s behind, followed after 1m 8s by Svan and after another 2m 34s by McRae. It was incredible that well over 23 minutes separated just the first five, a gap certainly not associated with an event which has been very closely fought indeed in the past.

Early on the final day, a Sunday during which just five stages were to be held, Grönholm found his car hard to steer to the left after his rack had been damaged. Laukkanen's screen was misting up because his blower fan was not working properly and, of course, his second windscreen did not have a heating element.

Kytölehto was troubled by wheels going out of balance due to mud, dirt and stones

caking up on their inside surfaces, so he had plastic flanges fitted so that they would scrape away the muck and prevent it from accumulating. There was not enough time left to see how long these flanges would last before being knocked off by stones!

Sibera had his front left brake caliper replaced after a cylinder began leaking, whilst Grönholm got to the end of the final stage with his front left brake on fire. The most disappointed driver of the whole event must have been Laukkanen. He had put up with all manner of troubles and struggled tenaciously through, only to have his clutch fail completely on the final stage. Even then he was keen not to give up and he and his

co-driver pushed their Golf GTi to the end of the stage. They took all of 1h 29m to traverse it! But there was still some way to go to the finish and the pair had to resign themselves to exceeding their maximum lateness.

There are no full World Championship points to consider, either for drivers or makes, but in the 2wd series (for makes only) an odd situation exists. Opel leads the series with 229 points to Peugeot's 221, Renault's 188 and Skoda's 153. But Opel can not take the championship because the team has not contested any qualifying rallies outside Europe. That will a matter to be decided between their rivals. **G P**

Neste 1000 Lakes Rally — 25-27 August, 1995

1 Tommi Mäkinen / Seppo Harjanne (SF)	Mitsubishi Lancer E3, Gp A	4h 39m 25s
2 Marcus Grönholm / Timo Rautiaunnen (SF)	Toyota Celica Turbo, Gp A	4h 48m 56s
3 Jarmo Kytölehto / Arto Kapanen (SF)	Opel Astra GSi, Gp A	5h 00m 06s
4 Per Svan / Johan Olsson (S)	Opel Astra GSi, Gp A	5h 01m 08s
5 Alister McRae / David Senior (GB)	Nissan Sunny GTi, Gp A	5h 04m 13s
6 Mika Korhonen / Launo Heinonen (SF)	Mitsubishi Lancer E2, Gp N	5h 06m 53s
7 Marko Ipatti / Harri Kiesi (SF)	Mitsubishi Lancer E2, Gp N	5h 07m 17s
8 Jouni Ahvenlammi / Teppo Leino (SF)	Toyota Celica GT-Four, Gp N	5h 09m 33s
9 Mika Utria / Marko Lehtinen (SF)	Mitsubishi Lancer E2, Gp N	5h 14m 08s
10 Pavel Siberia / Petr Gross (CS)	Skoda Felicia, Gp A	5h 16m 57s

as usual with such short but tricky preludes, it proved little. Eriksson moved up on the next and took the lead, only to lose it again on the fifth when he collected a front puncture in a tyre not equipped with Michelin's foam inserts. Bourne lost time when his gear selectors loosened and he could only get into third. Later, he put his Impreza off into a wet ditch (it had been raining) so hard that its rear suspension was wrecked.

McRae's rally came to a sudden end when, at a sharp corner after a long straight, he went right off the road and back on again, hitting a few things on the way. The damage included a burst radiator and loss of the belts which drove the power steering pump, water pump and alternator. He struggled off the stage, but soon after the overheating had its effect and the engine stopped. Australian Greg Carr stopped when his Proton's engine expired.

Towards the end, Mäkinen closed the gap between himself and team-mate Eriksson, but the Finn is not contesting the whole of the series, whereas the Swede is, so Mäkinen had to admit that there was some sense in a team order to allow Eriksson to win. But the gap became smaller, and it took a few serious words for the Finn to

knuckle under and resist his natural instinct to go flat out. Eventually, he finished 2m 1s behind Eriksson.

Among the drivers, Eriksson now leads from McRae by 43 points to 40. Mäkinen is a somewhat academic third with 27 points and Didier Auriol an even more academic fourth with 15. **G P**

Malaysia Rally — 12-14 August, 1995

1 Kenneth Eriksson / Staffan Parmander	Mitsubishi Lancer E3, Gp A	4h 47m 27s
2 Tommi Mäkinen / Seppo Harjanne	Mitsubishi Lancer E3, Gp A	4h 49m 28s
3 Karamjit Singh / Ron Teoh	Proton Wira 4wd, Gp N	5h 07m 43s
4 Tolley Challis / Rod van Straaten	Mitsubishi Galant VR4, Gp A	5h 16m 14s
5 "Monster" Tajima / Mark Stacey	Suzuki Swift GTi	5h 35m 26s
6 Masayuki Akaba / Atsushi Onozaki	Mitsubishi Lancer E3	5h 37m 09s
7 S. Pornsawan / S. Tuli	Mitsubishi Lancer E3	5h 37m 49s
8 Toshiteru Tomiyasu / S. Komiya	Mitsubishi Lancer E3	5h 39m 24s
9 Russell Palmer / Jagdev Singh	Suzuki Swift GTi	5h 43m 44s
10 C. Sinthukio / S. Pornthep	Mitsubishi Lancer E2	6h 00m 14s

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