

Driver Profile



Driver: Katsuhiko Taguchi
Country: Japan
Co-Driver: Mark Stacey
Country: Australia
Team: MRF Tyres



Katsu Taguchi from Japan is the longest serving Asia Pacific driver, a regular competitor since 1997 and APRC drivers champion in 1999.

Taguchi made his rally debut in a Group N Mitsubishi Lancer on the Rally New Zealand in 1994. In 1995 he moved to Australia to take up rallying full-time and competed in national events in Australia, New Zealand and Malaysia. He moved to Malaysia in 1997 and for 3 years competed in the Malaysia National Rally Championship ultimately winning the Group N Champion. He took an impressive 5th in the Group N category during the 1997 Asia Pacific Rally Championship (APRC).

On the 1999 APRC, he not only won overall but also took the Group N series Champion marking a spectacular double title victory. He participated on the 2001 Cyprus Rally of the WRC as part of the Mitsubishi works team. On his first attempt at the European round of the WRC, he at one point climbed to the 10th overall position. However, he was forced to retire midway through the event. But his unique talent was on display throughout the event and he subsequently received widespread acclaim for his efforts.

He returned to Japan in April 2002 and became an employee of Ralliart Japan. He then competed in the British Rally Championship in order gain further experience. On the Rally of Wales he finished a magnificent 7th overall. In 2003 he entered the 2003 APRC although not all the rounds. But on the 2004 APRC he competed in all the rounds and ended the series 3rd.

Since then Taguchi has been a regular competitor on the Asia Pacific series and while he has won many events, somehow a repeat win of the driver's title has eluded him. Last year (2008) was his strongest showing in many years with two wins (New Caledonia and Hokkaido) and several 2nd places, but a mechanical problem forced him out of Rally Canberra and a crash in the rain-storm at Malaysian handed the title once again to Crocker.

2009 could be Taguchi's year though. While he will be driving an older Mitsubishi Lancer Evo 9 this is a car that is both fast, sorted and strong, while his main competitors will be in newer machinery with perhaps not quite the same reliability.

Mark Stacey from Australia is Taguchi's co-driver and they will driver for the MRF Tyres team.

For more information, please visit Katsu's website:
<http://www.ralliart.com/katsu/>