



Safari Rally
03-04 April 2009
IRC Round: 3

iRC
Intercontinental
Rally Challenge

REVIEW

Tundo claims Safari Rally victory

The local Mitsubishi Lancer crew of Carl Tundo and Tim Jessop were victorious in the 2009 KCB Safari Rally, round three of the Intercontinental Rally Challenge.

2009

It was Tundo's second Safari Rally win in five years, also boosting his Kenyan National Rally Championship campaign. He also scored as full complement of IRC drivers' championship points, as this year only drivers holding African competition licences were eligible to score IRC driver points. Full points were awarded to all IRC-registered manufacturers however, enabling Mitsubishi to score a momentous one-two on what was arguably the toughest round of the entire championship this year.



This event, which was also round two of the Kenyan Championship, was a duel to the finish ramp right from the first stage to the very last. "I got off to a good start but it was clear I had a fight on my hands, said Tundo. "In fact, it was a rally that seemed to get harder the longer it continued. Conditions were at least consistent throughout the event, which enabled everyone to push at their hardest."

As has been the tradition in recent years, the rally got underway with a spectator superspecial stage on the outskirts of Nairobi at Thursday night, which attracted huge crowds. The next two days of rally action then took place in the area around the Athi River near Nairobi, and on dramatic stages close to the spectacular Great Rift Valley.

From the beginning, it was clear that the locals had the upper hand. Unsurprisingly, Kenyan residents dominated the podium positions on the Safari with Tundo's team mate, expatriate Briton Alastair Cavenagh (also in a Mitsubishi Lancer Evo 9) taking second place overall. Cavenagh pushed Tundo as hard as he could and set some promising stage times, missing out on victory by only 11 seconds after a hard-fought event.

Lee Rose – a podium finisher on the last IRC Safari Rally in 2007 – made the podium again after dropping time in a similar Mitsubishi with punctures on the rocky gravel surfaces. In a bid to secure a podium position, Rose was flying throughout the entire second day, but the considerable gap from Tundo was too big a margin to chase down. He finished third in his Mitsubishi Evo 9 behind Cavenagh. "I gave it everything I could, but it was not quite enough," said Rose. "Under the circumstances though, I'm very happy with third."



Asad Anwar was another former podium finisher on the previous occasion that the IRC visited the Safari Rally, but this time he too dropped back with mechanical difficulties on his Mitsubishi Lancer.

[1/2]

Tundo in the meantime was delighted with his victory. "It's amazing to win the Safari again," he concluded. "This was one of the most difficult events I ever did. It is a good start for the season though. I had a minute's cushion and drove sensibly fast but I still kept a good rhythm and pace. The biggest difficulty was just avoiding punctures and suspension damage."

Out of the 43 cars that started the event, only 30 made it to the finish line: testimony to the unique challenge of the African savannah. Amongst the retirements were Briton John Lloyd and Italian Rwanda resident Giancarlo Davite, both of whom were driving Mitsubishi Lancers.

There were no IRC two-wheel drive finishers on the Safari, ensuring that the 2WD scores remained the same as they had been after the previous round in Brazil.

Safari Rally results – IRC

1 Tundo/Jessop	Mitsubishi Lancer	2h47m27s
2 Cavenagh/Haji	Mitsubishi Lancer	+1m17s
3 Rose/Patel	Mitsubishi Lancer	+1m26s
4 Anwar/Sheikh	Mitsubishi Lancer	+8m57s
5 Horsey/Doig	Mitsubishi Lancer	+18m40s
6 Mitchel/Challen	Mitsubishi Lancer	+19m42s
7 Hans/Gitau	Mitsubishi Lancer	+20m39s
8 Horsey/Sassoon	Mitsubishi Lancer	+21m56s

No two-wheel drive finishers