

Frustrating Fifth for Hunt at Daybreaker Rally

- › **Brake Master Cylinder failure on SS4 start of bad luck for Ben Hunt on Manwatu's Daybreaker Rally**
- › **Hunt was also held up by a slower car on stage for 30km, losing minutes**

Auckland, New Zealand, 25 September 2023 – The weekend's Daybreaker Rally in Manawatu was frustrating for Škoda New Zealand Rally Team and driver, Ben Hunt.

The Škoda Fabia R5 has been running well all year, heading into Daybreaker on the back of Rally wins at Maramarua and Nelson and started the rally with times very close to Supercar Driver Shane van Gisbergen on SS1 and SS2.

But an unfortunate brake master cylinder failure left Hunt and co-driver, Tony Rawstorn with no brakes in Special Stage 4, they were able to nurse the vehicle out of the stage, but it took nearly 20 minutes to rectify the issue and the team were ultimately penalised 3.5 minutes due to the repair.

This put Hunt back down the order and caused further frustration on the rally's longest stage, the 42.7km Sandon Block SS6.

"We knew after the brake issue we had to attack that bit harder to stay in the fight, and with the car now stopping and driving great again, Tony and I were in the zone and pushing hard on the longer stage to claw back time. Unfortunately, we caught a slower car at the 12km mark, and they didn't let us pass, which held us up on the most critical stage of the rally."

"The rally organisers did give us 30 seconds back in light of the situation, but in reality, we'd lost much more than that. I do think we'd have clawed our way back to P4 if wasn't for that situation, but, that's motorsport, as they say," said Hunt.

While a win in the New Zealand Rally Championship is out of grasp for 2023, Hunt and the team has enjoyed the fast pace of the rally season this year and the added pressure of keeping pace with full-time professionals like Hayden Paddon and Shane van Gisbergen.

“The competition this year is really intense, with two full-time drivers to chase down, I do think it’s been awesome for our sport. Hayden’s really on form with all the seat time he has had in Europe this year and Shane in the field too, I feel there’s bunch of us that have all gotten faster to stay in the chase. I’m just gutted I’ve had issues each round that Shane has contested so I haven’t shared a podium yet. Hopefully we can make that happen at Rally Bay of Plenty!” said Hunt.

The Škoda New Zealand Rally Team will return for the final round of the 2023 NZRC on the 14th of October at the Rally Bay of Plenty.

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