



2026 Sno*Drift Rally Car 407 Protest Decision

Date:	17 February 2026	Time:	12:26EST
Subject:	Car 407 Protest Decision		
From:	The Panel of Stewards for the Protest	# of pages:	6
To:	Car 407 Tippman/Tippman	Attachments:	2

A Protest in compliance with GCR 9.2 was accepted by the Stewards (submitted in writing signed by the competitor, within the required time frame and with the stipulated protest fee).

The Chief Steward J.B. Niday formed a Panel of Stewards per GCR 9.10 comprised of:

- Sno*Drift Senior Steward and Protest Hearing Chair Alan Perry
- Sno*Drift Event Steward Michel Hoche-Mong
- ARA Senior Steward Justin Pritchard

This Protest Decision documents the findings and the decision of the Panel of Stewards following an online Protest Hearing held on Thursday 12 February 2026 at 18:00EST in compliance with GCR 9.5.

Present at this meeting prior to its closing for Steward-only deliberations were:

- The Panel of Stewards listed above
- The Sno*Drift Clerk of the Course Bob Martin and Asst. Clerk Rob Bohn
- The Protester Nicholas Tippman (Driver of Car 407)
- Clerk of the Course witness Jay Huffner (RallySafe)
- Crew Witness Ryan Thompson (Thompson Racing Fabrication)
- Observers J.B. Niday (Competition Director), Preston Osborn (Series Manager)

The Basis of the Organizers Assessment of the Penalty

The Clerk of the Course, Bob Martin, provided a written statement (attached) and oral testimony during the Hearing explaining the basis for the imposition of exclusion against Car 407. He stated that the penalty was applied pursuant to RCR 6.9.1 (Limitation on Practicing), which prescribes exclusion as the mandatory sanction.

- Mr. Martin testified that he was approached by “a couple” competitors to report that Car 407 was observed driving on road near stage roads. To confirm this, he reached out to the event’s RallySafe official. A RallySafe time lapse view confirming this was produced and shown. The time lapse was shown during the Hearing.

Mr. Martin indicated that he was not concerned by the competition vehicle being where it was, but, having received the report from competitors, he felt compelled to apply the rules.

The Arguments by the Crew Against the Exclusion Penalty

The Team submitted a written Protest Document (attached) and made a presentation at the Protest Hearing. In both they made these arguments:

- **Confirmation of Repairs Not Testing.** The team characterized their actions as “confirmation of repairs” and not “illegal testing”, as the infraction was called in the Inquiry Responses board.
- **Common Practice.** The team claimed that it is very common for other teams to perform actions similar to those they took after arriving in the vicinity of the event to participate in it but outside of competition.

The Findings of the Panel of Stewards

- **On the Validity of the Infraction.** RCR 6.9 concerns “practicing” and its definition includes “testing a competition vehicle”. Despite the team’s characterization of their actions as “confirmation of repairs” and not “testing”, it is a distinction without a difference. Making changes to a competition vehicle and then driving it to evaluate the impact of those changes is testing.

The Panel of Stewards finds that:

- The team was testing the competition vehicle in violation of RCR 6.9.1.
- **Common Practice.** The Panel of Stewards agree with the Team’s claim. When considering their actions as competitors in the past, each found that they had likely been unintentionally been in violation of RCR 6.9 as written.

Decision: The penalty of exclusion is revoked.

This decision was unanimous.

The protest fee is to be returned.

Rationale: Having determined that a breach of RCR 6.9.1 did occur, the Panel of Stewards considered the proportionality of the penalty. While a violation of the letter of the rule, it was not a violation of the intent of the rule as described RCR 6.9. The car was not driven on a stage road. No speed limit was exceeded sufficiently for a speeding penalty to be assessed. There was no competitive advantage gained. There was no disruption to the community. Accordingly, the exclusion is revoked. The actions taken by the Crew and their Service Crew were consistent with actions commonly taken by teams in the hours before the start of competition, so no penalty assessed.

Modification by the Panel of Stewards of the originally applied penalty of exclusion is within the scope of their regulatory authority. Under RCR 6.4.6 and GCR 7.4 Stewards are expressly empowered to exercise discretion in the assessment of

penalties where appropriate under the circumstances. In this instance, after considering the facts and the nature of the infraction, the Panel determined that the penalty of exclusion was excessive.

It is recommended that ARA reword RCR 6.9 to more clearly describe the case(s) it should be applied to or allow the Clerk of the Course discretion on whether to apply a penalty.

The right to appeal this decision is stipulated in General Competition Rules Article 10.



Alan Perry



Michel Hoche-Mong



Justin Pritchard

407 Tippmann/Tippmann

Sno-Drift 26' Expulsion Protest

February 12, 2026

To ARA Officials and Stewards,

Thank you all for taking the time to review our request to remove the result of expulsion from Sno-Drift rally 2026.

We were found guilty of illegal testing, per rule 6.9 in the RCR.

We believe that what we were doing should be considered confirmation of repairs, and not testing. Confirmation of repairs is very common practice by nearly all competitors throughout the course of a rally event. It is extremely common to be done after a test secession, or a day of competition, after repairs or work has been done on the car. Because the RCR does not clarify specifically what is testing which should be prohibited, and what constitutes validation, or confirmation, and what is testing.

On Friday, February 6th, a registered crew member took the competition car from our team garage, and set out on a drive. Purpose was to validate operation of the car, after a complaint from the driver as a result of a sanctioned private test on Wednesday, February 4th. The tracker was left in the car, and very open, visible section of county highway was chosen to drive the car, obeying all traffic laws. This location was chosen because it was away from town, houses, and very minimal if any general traffic. It was however by unfortunate circumstances to be a route used by many competitors during Reece. NOT A COMPETITION road. I believe what we did is NOT testing, in fact it's very common to see crews driving cars about during a rally week. Before the race, after a day of competition, shortly after arriving to town, etc. These are all reasons teams drive rally cars on open public roads, obeying traffic laws, and being respectful to the community. This is not only permissible, but quite common.

Later in the day, the crew took our driver, Nick Tippmann for a test drive in the same manor, but in a different location. Nick drove the car only for approximately one mile, obeying all legal traffic laws, just to confirm proper function of the car. There was no high speed, no co-driver, no pace notes, just simply driving the car, making

confirmation of function. Under pressure of scrutiny by clerk of the course Bob Martin, when asked in a room full of race officials, driver Nick Tippmann spoke in a manor which described testing. The verbiage used was regretful, not correct, but the result of first time under this extreme pressure and circumstance.

We have now described very clearly and accurately what took place on February 6th. No part of our crew believes this constitutes illegal testing, which is not clearly defined in the RCR. Based on facts of what happened, and lack of clear definitions in the rules, we would request that the penalty of expulsion be removed or reduced. If you feel a penalty need be applied, a monetary, or time penalty would feel appropriate, not expulsion. Not only do we feel not in violation of the rules, but have concern for the precedent which could be set if any team is driving a competition car outside of the specified rally route could be construed as "testing" and result in expulsion. "Validation" or "Confirmation" of a competition vehicle is actually extremely common practice.

Sincerely yours,

Nick Tippmann

David Tippmann

Ryan Thompson

Car 407

Sometime Friday afternoon, probably during the first service, I had a couple of teams complain about car 407 "practicing" on Co Rd 489, which was part of the transit from SS 11/15 to SS 12/16, during the Friday morning recce session.

I asked RallySafe to show me the movements, if any, of car 407 during this time period. RallySafe showed Car 407 leave Lewiston Friday morning, traverse Co Rd 612, turn onto Co Rd 489, proceed several miles north on Co Rd 489 (onto the transit section of that road) and then proceed to go back and forth along a short section of that road several times. RallySafe also showed Car 407 leave Lewiston in the afternoon, travel once several miles in the opposite direction, stop, turn around and return to Lewiston.

I interviewed Nicholas and David Tippman, the driver and co-driver respectively of car 407, and Ryan Thompson, the Principle of TRF Racing, the support team for car 407. Nicholas admitted to taking the car out once in the afternoon to "get a feel for the sequential transmission". Ryan admitted to taking car 407 out in the morning to iron out some bugs in the vehicle. Ryan agreed that he went onto Co Rd 489 for his testing but Nick was unsure of where he went.

Per RCR Section 6.9, "Practicing shall be deemed to include a wide range of actions including but not limited to: testing a competition vehicle.". Since both Ryan and Nicholas admitted to testing of a competition vehicle, the penalty for illegal practicing as specified in RCR 6.9.1 was applied.

Bob Martin

Clerk of the Course

2026 Sno*Drift Rally