

# Class of 2019

Frank 'Butch' Arciero Jr | Lynn Chenoweth | Bobby Ferro  
Robby Gordon | David Higgins | Steve Morris



## David Higgins

Competition – Rally

It took a driver from a small island country in the Irish Sea to help put Rally back on the map in the United States. David Higgins was born in 1972 on the Isle of Man, the country famous for motorsports. David's grandparents and parents have all been successful rally drivers, and David's brother Mark is an accomplished rally driver in his own right. His children started kart racing and they have been successful, winning many local races.

Many people are unaware that Rally is a category at ORMHOF, something that Higgins' induction is sure to change. David Higgins joins John Buffum as a Rally inductee in the Off-Road Motorsports Hall of Fame, and deservedly so. Buffum was inducted fifteen years ago, in 2004. While Buffum was dominant throughout the 1970s and 80s,

retiring at the end of his undefeated 1987 year in the United States, Higgins has set the 21<sup>st</sup> Century Rally world on fire matching Buffum's fete of the perfect undefeated season, winning all eight rounds of the Rally America National Championship in 2015. There is no driver more dominant in U.S. Rally today than Higgins.

David Higgins joined Subaru Rally Team USA in 2011. He has won multiple Rally America National Championships (2011-2016, 2018) for the Subaru brand, racking up more than thirty-five victories. His 2018 championship was his seventh for Subaru and ninth overall in the U.S.

Higgins got his first taste of motorsport in motorcycle trials when he was 8 years old. By age 10, he had moved into national kart racing and won seven titles against drivers including future F1 star David Coulthard. At his first opportunity David started rallying and was invited to drive in the team that late WRC legend Richard Burns drove for in the Peugeot 205 Challenge.

David went on to win 1997, 1999 and 2002 British Rally Class Championships. In 2002, he also came to America as a privateer and won the SCCA ProRally Championship. He repeated his success in 2003, winning six events and again claiming the SCCA ProRally Driver's Championship. For 2004 it was back to Britain where David contested the full season and became the British Rally Champion. David also began rallying in the ultra-competitive Chinese Rally Championship in 2004, where he helped his team win the Team's Championship in 2004, 2007, 2009 and 2012. (Foreign drivers can't score individual points in the Chinese championship).





Rally cars hurtle along narrow dirt roads at speeds in excess of 100mph. The driver has no idea what lies around the next bend and must rely entirely on instructions called out from the co-driver's 'Pace Notes' to help negotiate whatever lies ahead.

The ability to react and control the vehicle when the unexpected happens is vital in rally racing. This kind of driving requires immense concentration, great reserves of endurance, lightning reactions and near-superhuman levels of skill.

Higgins current ride is a 2019 Subaru WRX STI. He competes in the Open 4WD Class in the American Rally Association (ARA) National Championship. For the 2019 season, Higgins' Subaru sports the #1, in recognition of his status as the reigning National Champion.

Beginning with a stock 2019 Subaru WRX STI, the vehicle's interior is stripped bare, the body shell is lightened and fully seam-welded, and a multipoint roll cage is added for extra strength.

The standard gas tank is replaced with a rally-proof Kevlar fuel cell and lightweight carbon/Kevlar competition seats with a HANS (Head and Neck Restraint System). Other interior additions include a custom carbon fiber dashboard, carbon fiber door panels, a Rally odometer and an onboard fire suppression system.

Under the hood sits a 2.0-liter, 4-cylinder, turbocharged and intercooled STI engine with an ARA Championship-mandated 34mm turbo inlet restrictor. Launch control, a turbo anti-lag system and a hydraulic handbrake are just a few of the performance modifications. A 6-speed, close-ratio dog-engagement (fewer, larger teeth) gearbox is used, allowing Higgins to shift without the clutch. The DCCD (Driver Controlled Center Differential) is used in a similar way to a stock WRX STI, but the team installs a competition Electronic Control Unit for the differential, allowing for greater control of the torque delivery between all four wheels.

The exterior of the car implements a custom widebody kit as well as mud flaps and a 1/4-inch aluminum skid plate underneath. The stock rear wing is replaced with a larger vertically slotted wing, which greatly improves down force to the rear of the car, even as it slides sideways.

David is a well-respected performance driving instructor as well and when he isn't racing in the states, he often travels the world doing one-on-one rally coaching to drivers of every level.