

WRC Rally-Spec Fairlady 280Z

In 1978, Nissan transitioned from the Fairlady S30 series to a luxury GT car, introducing the S130 series. During the S30 series era, Nissan continued to compete in International Rally with the 240Z from 1970 to 1974, achieving a remarkable 1-2 finish in the Safari Rally in 1971 and winning the Swedish Rally. However, due to changes in sales strategy, Nissan opted to shift its focus from the Fairlady to Rallying with the Violet.

This decision sparked rumors that the S130 series Z car would be withdrawn from motorsports. Contrary to these speculations, numerous race cars from the S130 series participated in American IMSA races and achieved significant victories. Notably, Paul Newman also raced in this model.

Masaaki Kawahara, who had previously competed in domestic Rallies in Japan with the S30 series, quickly adapted the S130 into a Rally car and expressed his intention to participate in International rallies. In 1978, Kawahara had competed in the 1000 Lakes Rally with a Toyota Celica 2000GT and decided to enter the new S130 series Z for the upcoming season. Kawahara's policy regarding Rally was to participate with aesthetically pleasing cars rather than focusing solely on winning. This philosophy resulted in the development of the 280Z Rally specification, and the vehicle was subsequently prepared for the 1000 Lakes Rally.

This car was manufactured by APEX, a specialist shop for Rally cars located in Gifu Prefecture. The S310 series vehicle, which had been converted into a luxury GT car, was quite heavy; therefore, all unnecessary components and coatings were removed, resulting in a total weight of -85 kg.

The suspension was fully reinforced, and a six-point roll cage was installed to enhance body rigidity, ensuring that it far exceeds the rigidity of the 240Z.

The shocks were equipped with low-pressure, height-adjustable gas shocks manufactured by TOKIKO. The spring rate was increased by 30% over the standard, and the rear base was reinforced. The engine compression ratio was set to 10.8, and the Electronic Gas Injection (EGI) system was removed from the carburetor, which was replaced with a 44 Solex. Additional modifications included port polishing, a custom camshaft, an oil cooler, and an oil pump. All other optional parts were installed.

The seats are the Mexico GT, a seat belts are KLIPPAN, the radio is an Icom, and the trip computer is a Halda. The underguard is custom-made from duralumin, and the rear is also protected from the differential to the gas tank. Four CIBIE Oscar Plus lights are mounted on the front bumper, and the headlights have been upgraded to Z-beam H4.

This 280Z Rally is one of a very few genuine WRC Rally car built in a period and very rare opportunity to find one. Competed 8 times WRA Rally Championship by Mr.Z of Rally driver Masaaki Kawahara.