

2007 Iron Butt Rally, Day 4
Thursday, August 23, 2007

Two more riders are out. Don Wescott had a zero speed tip-over on his K1200GT in Bath, Maine. It happened on one of those intersections where a side road meets a slightly elevated highway, requiring the motorcycle to be held at an awkward angle while waiting to enter the highway. Don landed exactly wrong and suffered a third-degree shoulder separation. He plans to limp home to Nova Scotia on the bike, hoping that he can find people willing to help him remove his helmet when necessary; he can no longer remove it himself.

Bill Wade is also out. He parked his R1200RT along the side of a highly-crowned road and didn't pay enough attention to the road crown when he got back on the bike and pulled away. He rode the bike right into the ditch. The bike suffered only minor plastic damage, but Bill was unable to get it out of the ditch by himself. He called a tow truck. The tow truck driver was able to pull the bike out of the ditch, but he pulled a front disk brake off the bike in the process.

Bill's plans for trailering his bike back to his home in New Jersey and continuing from there with his other bike were vetoed by Rallymaster Landry. When a rider switches bikes, the second bike must be ridden to the location where the first bike died. So Bill rented a Harley-Davidson Ultra-Glide in Manchester, New Hampshire. He called in later to report that the Harley was running on one cylinder and would only go 60 mph. He has decided to quit.

Jim Winterer reported that he avoided a DNF only because he wears Rocky Eliminator boots. Jim, a trials rider, encountered high winds, dense fog, and patches of ice while riding up and down Mount Washington in New Hampshire. On the way down, at an estimated speed of 3 mph, he was literally blown over by the wind. His foot was pinned under his Suzuki DL650 and he could not get it free. He was pinned right in the middle of the road in heavy fog, "trapped like a rat." He considered for a moment whether he was going to have to hack his foot off with his Swiss Army knife. Fortunately, he was able to reach the laces on his boot, untie them, and wriggle his foot loose. He's banged up a bit but back on the road.

The weather was beautiful yesterday on the Gaspé Peninsula, but riders returning to St. Louis through the Chicago area were again getting beat up by Mother Nature. David Smith was spying on riders at Buckingham Fountain last night, a bonus he was responsible for scouting. He observed riders Greg Marbach and Vance Keeney trying desperately to get an acceptable photo of their rally flags in front of a dimly-illuminated fountain. David says that Polaroid stock should be going up sharply tomorrow.

David also reports that Chicago has been getting socked with bands of storms producing tornadoes, intense lightning, high winds, and deluges of rain that have knocked down trees and power lines all over town and flooded and closed Interstate 94 for a few hours. He wrote, "If you

thought Chicago traffic was bad normally, try getting detoured off the interstate and onto flooded side streets with no working traffic lights as you're trying to get to bonuses with weird time restrictions while riding in a blinding downpour. Classic Iron Butt Rally weather - how do Mike and Lisa do it every time?"

Smith's weather report is consistent with a report received from Jeff Earls from Chicago. Jeff said that the wind was so intense that he had to take shelter in a car wash.

Eric Jewell called in while taking a leisurely boat ride. Some of the riders may not realize that traveling on a ferry is equivalent to riding down the road, except that you can sleep while riding a ferry (but you can't claim a rest bonus because you are making progress). One of the ferry rides available on this leg is from Yarmouth, Nova Scotia to Portland, Maine. It's about a 200 mile ride, but the ferry is a fast catamaran. You can bet Jim Owen knows about it.

Now that the window has closed for the first call-in bonus, it's safe to provide a little bit more information on how the riders did. The instructions for the bonus were simple. Here again is what was printed in the bonus listing:

*Call-In Bonus - no specific location 2,000 points Available
August 22, 2007*

Call 916-xxx-xxxx and leave the following information:

Your name, your rider number, your location (city/town and state/province), the last bonus you scored, and the bonus you are headed for. While it is not required for this bonus, if you have a quick story, please leave it also!

Time: _____ Odometer: _____ Code: CI

Approved: _____

All the riders needed to report during the call was their name, rider number, current location, last bonus scored, and next bonus they were headed for. It took Kendall Anderson exactly 10 seconds to provide all of the requested information (that was the shortest call). That's not much time to have to spend for 2,000 points.

95 of our 97 riders did the call-in bonus. The two that didn't call in were Tom Loftus, who quit, and Chip Hyde, who crashed on the way to Goose Bay. Of the 95 that called in, 88 reported the information requested. Seven riders screwed up. When they get to the scoring table, they will learn that failing to report any one of the required items is equivalent to leaving your flag out of a bonus photo.

Marty Leir failed to report his rider number. He doesn't get extra credit for providing his odometer reading while rolling down the highway.

Arlen Brunsvold, Jr. and Vance Keeney failed to report their current location.

Joe DeRyke failed to report the last bonus he scored.

Don Wescott, Bill Wade, and Jim Winterer failed to report their next bonus objective. One of the purposes of this bonus is to let the Rallymaster know where to look for riders who are missing. "I don't know where I'm going next" just didn't cut it for a description of "the bonus you are headed for."

For Leg 2 and for future rallies, the instructions for the call-in bonus are going to be changed slightly. There were a number of cases where the last bonus or the next bonus was reported as "the rest bonus." We are going to accept that for Leg 1 because it meets the letter of the bonus instructions, but what we really wanted was location. From now on, we are going to tell the riders to remember that what's important for a call-in bonus is the same as what's important when it comes to real estate: location, location, and location. We are going to ask for the current location, the location of the last bonus, and the location of the next bonus.

The other two things we want are name and rider number. We want both for two reasons. First, the audio quality on some of the calls isn't perfect and either the name or the rider number sometimes gets garbled. Second, because this is an international competition, it's difficult to understand some of the riders because of the language barrier, especially those from Minnesota.

Friday is going to be a very busy day here at Rally Central. The scorers meeting starts at 3:30 p.m., scoring starts at 4:00 p.m., the checkpoint opens at 7:00 p.m. and closes at 9 p.m. We will try to get the Leg 1 results tabulated as soon as possible and have results available shortly after 9. I'm sure I will be up long after that analyzing the routes of the top ten riders.

Tom Austin

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