

2007 Iron Butt Rally, Day 9
Tuesday, August 28, 2007

The Parade to Mt. Hamilton

Today was the motorcycle parade to the top of Mt. Hamilton, where the riders had to sign in with Dean Tanji at the Lick Observatory in order to get the 24,057 point bonus. The point total was set so that it would attract every rider who didn't go to Alaska. During the 9:00 a.m. to 3:00 p.m. bonus window, a total of only 54 motorcycles showed up.

Accounting for the 14 riders who we know to be out of the rally and the 9 riders who headed for Alaska (Barnes, Frens, Kulwicki, Nye, Fish, Droegemueller, DeRyke, Watt, and Allison), there were 20 other motorcycles that we expected to try for the observatory. We know that David Derrick and Glenn Pancoast were sipping Kool-Aid in BMW dealerships waiting for their motorcycles to be put back in running order. Mark Collins was stranded at a Harley dealership.

The other 17 motorcycles that were no-shows are being ridden by Maura Gatensby, Bill Thweatt, Bob and Silvie Torter, Jim Mulcahy, Peter Murray, Bob Mueller, Rick Neeley, Joel Rappoport, Mike Senty, Jim Simonet, Jim Winterer, Steve Branner, Kevin Healey, Jim Bain, David Bordeaux, Richard Buber, and Don Catterton. They are either running behind schedule or on a sub-optimal route.

Fourteen motorcycles were waiting at the observatory when the checkpoint opened. Their riders were Mike Hutsal, Reiner and Lisa Kappenberger, Tom Melchild, Jack Shoalmire, Chris Cimino, Vance Keeney, Bob Collin, Terry and Lynda Lahman, Ken Morton, Rick Martin, Richard Keegan, Chris McGaffin, Jeff Earls, and Greg Marbach.

At the back end of the parade, the rider in 3rd place at the end of Leg 1, Gregg Burger, came within 20 seconds of missing the checkpoint window. Doug Bailey was much more conservative, leaving himself a whole minute. Alex Schmitt had 8 minutes to spare.

The other riders that made it to the observatory, in the order they signed in, were Mike Langford, Marty Leir, Peter Leap, John Tomasovitch, Brett Donahue, Rick Miller, Brian Roberts, Kendall Anderson, Alan Barbic, Tobie Stevens, Lisa Stevens, Chris Sakala, Paul Peloquin, Vicki Johnston, Matt Watkins, Rebecca Vaughn, Gerard Memmen-Kruger, Tom and Rosie Sperry, Tom Skemp, Art Garvin, Mike Getzendanner, Michael Boge, Carl Stark, Karol Patzer, Curt Gran, Tony DeLorenzo, Andy Mills, Jim Owen, John Langan, Kevin Healey, Jim Bain, Don Jones, Dick Peek, Mike Evans, Jim and Donna Phillips, Stephan Bolduc, and Eric Jewell.

Dean Tanji reports that everything ran very smoothly at the checkpoint.

It took less than a minute per rider for check in. There was, however, a minor mishap on the twisty 2-lane road leading to the observatory. Doug Bailey and Dick Peek bumped together on a tight turn and both bikes went down. There was no major damage and both riders are continuing on.

IBR veteran Dave Biasotti also gave me a report from the observatory. Dave talked to Jim Owen, who told Dave that he had already been to Vancouver, Mt. Saint Helens, Gerlach, and all of the San Francisco bonuses. Jim said that he was headed for the Sierras (no surprise). He covered 3,000 miles in 48 hours before getting 6 hours of sleep last night. Dave said that Jim looked well rested and his bike has been running great, but he is having one problem: he is running low on Polaroid film because he has taken over 120 pictures!

Service Bay Action

Leg 1 leader David Derrick broke down a second time. The same problem that BMW of Las Vegas was supposed to have fixed cropped up again in Yosemite. Arrangements were made to get the bike towed for a second time to a dealer in Modesto, 90 miles away.

Glenn Pancoast spent most of the day in Salt Lake City waiting for a new final drive to be installed in his R1200GS.

Mark Collins' problem was a broken rim on the rear wheel on his 1972 Harley. Luckily he was able to obtain a new rim in Missoula, Montana. He's back on the road today, but his chances of making the West Coast on time were shot.

Rick Neeley was at BMW of Las Vegas tonight to get a failed odometer replaced on his R1200GS.

Calls From the Road

Rebecca Vaughn may have set a new Iron Butt Rally record with her hotel stay last night. Yesterday, while scoring her call-in bonus, she said that she was on her way to Big Sur where she would try to find a place to stay for the night. As soon as Lisa Landry heard the recording, she said, "She won't find anything."

Sure enough, Rebecca called in this morning to report that she couldn't find a place to stay in Big Sur. She ended up going to Carmel, which is not exactly known for economical accommodations. She found a room for \$400. But, hey, the rest bonus was 7,723 points. 19 points per dollar is a bargain on this rally, especially for the many riders visiting BMW service departments throughout North America.

1999 IBR winner George Barnes called in from Homer, Alaska. He's there

with rally newbie Don Kulwicki. They have a 4,000 mile ride to get back home and, at the time of the call, they had only 65 hours left before the final checkpoint opens. That requires just shy of a Bun Burner Gold pace for almost three full days.

Rob Nye called in today to report that his first bonus after the repair of his failed final drive was Custer's Last Stand. This rally has given Rob an appreciation for how Custer must have felt at the bitter end.

There was no call today from Jim Frens. That's probably a very good sign. Jim is probably way ahead of George Barnes and Don Kulwicki and on schedule to make it back from Homer in time. If Jim stays on schedule, he will be going to the scoring table with a huge point total. But will it be enough? As best we can follow Jim Owen via Star Traxx, he seems to be snagging an amazing number of high point bonuses all over the Western U.S. Several other riders also have the potential to score more in the West than is available on the way to Homer and back.

We may know a bit more tomorrow when we start getting information from the second call-in bonus on this leg, but it's likely to be late Friday morning before we know who is going to win the 2007 Iron Butt Rally.

Tom Austin

August 28, 2007

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