

Tunes

Music has a way of getting to the heart of human emotion. Words set to a tune can touch us deeply, and even get stuck in our heads. Music can bring our emotions up and pull them down. Many riders spend hours setting up just the right playlist to keep them motivated and focused during long days in the saddle. It is powerful stuff.

Many songs could be associated with various IBR's and the variety of situations that engulf the riders over 11 days. The rally staff has even discussed the idea of including wav files in the reports to set the tone of the news of the day.

There is a song by Jimmy Cliff that was actually part of the theme of the 2001 IBR. If I recall correctly, it was played at the start banquet as Kneebone entered the room wearing the dark, hooded cloak of the rally wizard:

*I can see clearly now the rain is gone.
I can see all obstacles in my way.
Gone are the dark clouds that had me blind.
Its gonna be a bright (bright)
Bright (bright) sunshiny day.*

*Oh, yes I can make it now the pain is gone.
All of the bad feelings have disappeared.
Here is the rainbow I've been praying for.
Its gonna be a bright (bright)
Bright (bright) sunshiny day.*

There was rampant speculation, even fear, in the months prior to the start of the 2001 rally that riders would have to go to Alaska to finish well. But no one could figure out how it could be done based on the announced checkpoint locations. There just was not enough time.

The clouds were pushed back when Mike announced that one checkpoint could be skipped by riders heading to Alaska. The room was stunned. Few, if any, had considered that possibility.

We are not sure if the above lyrics would be the best choice of verse to describe the start of Leg 3. The rain may not be gone for some riders. There will still be obstacles for riders to surmount. The pain may not be gone. The rainbow may not yet be visible.

There were dark clouds swirling in the rider's minds regarding just exactly how complicated rally wizard Jeff Earls would make the final leg of the 2017 IBR. Those clouds were parted a little past 4:00am Sunday morning. No more wonder or dread regarding Jeff's last leg puzzle. What Pandorian box of options might he unleash on the riders remaining in the rally?

Rider's meeting

The problem, at least for the riders that were behind the curve on rest, and perhaps still a bit foggy at 4:00 a.m. waiting for that first cup of coffee to activate their neurons, was grasping the concept. Some questions were asked and answered as many as three times, yet the perplexed faces remained.

Jeff anticipated this reaction and had a poster prop placed on an easel and ready. He quickly resorted to using the poster to visually demonstrate the score sheet bonus claiming order for riders that were not getting the concept verbally. Observers could see the mental light bulbs go off on a few faces. More questions followed. More clarifications were provided until there were no more hands raised for additional questions.

For some, the fog remained until a few minutes of post meeting one-on-one assistance was provided. Riders need to be very clear on the correct way to approach the strings. Otherwise, the scoring table after Leg 3 could be a rather harsh environment for tired riders. On a leg as long as this one, making a mistake could be extremely costly.

As before, in Legs 1 and 2, using string multipliers is not a requirement to achieve the necessary points become a finisher. However, those riders who successfully plan and complete strings will dramatically increase their point totals.

Leg 3

What was the twist for Leg 3? The bonus strings are now five bonuses long. Riders must collect three bonuses from one matching category and two bonuses from a different matching category.

For instance, Land-Land-Land-Water-Water would be an acceptable string. Or Water-Water-Land-Land-Land would be an acceptable string. Or Land-Water-Land-Water-Water would also work. Strings can also be claimed back to back. Picking up a bonus from a third category breaks the string. Strings must be built in chronological order of collection. In other words, the odometer readings for each bonus on the claimed bonus form must be in sequential order.

As with Leg 2, the points assigned to the bonuses changed once more for Leg 3. The multiplier for the last bonus in a string is now a factor of 4. For example, let's say a rider successfully collects a string of bonuses with point values of 1, 1, 1, 1, and 4000. Their points for that string in Leg 3 would be 16,004.

Stats

Mike Riley, from Oklahoma on a Kawasaki C14, moved up 40 positions between Leg 1 and leg 2. He reported feeling good and being ready for a great Leg 3.

Sam and Sydney Liles stopped at the Rally Hotel for their rest bonus the night before check in and reported that it was hot. In fact the statement between nearly every other sentence Sam said to me was, "it is hot". They got some rest and left for an additional round of bonus collection, resulting in a move of 39 positions at the end of Leg 2. The move from the ill fated K16 that dashed their hopes in 2015 to the R1200GS seems to be working very well.

Danny Dossman's wife and daughter were on hand at the checkpoint to encourage him and celebrate his 37 position rise in the standings.

A number of folks are clearly having fun watching this rally from the sidelines. Those with a love of statistics have been at work. Their efforts have yielded a treasure trove of information on places like the IBDone list and FJR forum. One of the metrics that has been calculated is the points-per-mile efficiency of the riders. Sadly, points count, but points-per-mile do not. A rider can be very efficient and still fail to reach the number of points needed to be a finisher.

Having noted that, it is interesting to see the efficiency stats. Some riders can route well and some can't. Some can ride long hours and some can't. The top finishers have that rare combination of being able to route and ride.

Dace 'Raven' Park is in 75th place AND she is having a blast. She is also currently the most efficient rider overall, with a reported 8.3 points per mile ridden. Her report from Colorado today noted great weather and an even better statistic, lots of smiles per mile.

Kurt Worden, in the top 10 on his Ninja 250, is second overall in efficiency, with 8.25 points per mile.

On the Road Again

As noted in the last report, several riders were out of the hotel, mounted, and on their way early Sunday morning. Many riders took much longer to get a handle on the Leg 3 puzzle and depart to ride their plans. In fact, there were still rally bikes in the rider parking area in Allen, Texas at noon time on Sunday. The last rider still in the rally did not depart the hotel until after 7:15 p.m. Sunday evening, over 15 hours after the rider meeting.

Information from the road is sparse, which is likely a good thing. Chuck Lackey reports that he clipped a dog on I-40 Sunday night. He did not go down, but has damage to a light and one highway peg. We also expect that his pair of LD Comforts will need to be washed sooner rather than later. He is OK and continuing to collect bonus points.

Barb Smith reported that there was a local parade going on in Santa Fe, NM near a bonus that riders were attempting to collect. She reported that the main street and all side streets were blocked. Riders were having to park and walk a few blocks to the bonus.

If the bonus that you expect to take under 2 minutes to collect actually takes 10 or 15 minutes to collect, the delay reverberates through the route timing over the next few hours. First weather, now parades. The riders may have had some choice words for such local impediments to their progress.

A blown rear shock can also put a kink in your routing plans. Greg Lenentine is in NW Florida and has asked for anyone in the area between there and the Carolinas to let him know if they can help.

Martin Cover called in and actually gave his correct rider number today. At times, the good comes with a side of bad. Such is the case with Martin. He has lost his rally flag and will be in selfie mode for the rest of the rally. He is still collecting bonuses.

John Kerr reported mesmerizing a deer with his headlights in Colorado. His FJR "head butted" the mesmerized the deer, causing considerable damage to the side of the bike. He had materials with him to fashion a temporary repair, including what he called "casting material". He needed water to mix the casting material, but did not have any. Apparently, peeing into the container produced a sufficient, if fragrant, result. At last report, he is continuing to collect bonuses.

Nancy Lefcourt said her face was hurting because she was smiling so much riding scenic roads. She later acknowledged that it might also have something to do with her sunburn.

Andrew Hall is feeling strong, but "not counting the chickens before they hatch".

Danny Dossman spent some time in East Tennessee while getting a tire replaced. He said he used the time wisely to do some re-routing and that "life is good".

Sadly, Richard Synder is out of the rally. Thankfully, he reports being home safely.

Beasts

Jason Jonas, our Spotwalla guru reported on FB that he encountered podium contender John Coons at a gas station. John was focused and clearly on a mission. He had to go inside to get a proper receipt, but did not take time to talk, even to the Spotwalla guru. Other competitors, further down the field and perhaps missing human contact after so many days on the road, might have taken a moment or to talk with one of the icons of our sport, but not Coons. That is just one of the reasons he is currently ranked near the top.

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