

## Friday June 21 Day 5 Part 2 Say What?

Yes, this is being posted on Saturday, June 22. Yes, we have seen the online requests for the daily reports to get posted faster. Yes, there is a lot going on with the rally. Yes, we are gathering the info, processing, and posting as fast as possible. Yes, we cannot keep up with all the social media posts from hundreds of rabid fans, but we really appreciate all the interest and info everyone is sending to us, as well as posting directly online. Yes, it all adds to the excitement of the event. Yes, we hope our readers will appreciate the added perspective we are attempting to provide via the daily reports.

If you read Day 5 - Part 1, you may have noticed a few rookie names in the top tier of Leg 1 results. Historically, being on top at the end of Leg 1 is no guarantee of being on top at the finish. Some may have pushed too deep into their reserves on Leg 1 and could find it difficult to maintain the pace as the points and miles increase. At this point, it is too early to gauge the level of *git-er-done* left in the tanks for these riders.

Having noted that, it is encouraging to see so many rookies doing well in the rally. As we observed in an earlier report, this is shaping up to be one of the better rookie classes anyone on staff can recall. We hope they can all keep their head in the game and finish successfully.

Riders reported encountering a variety of environmental challenges on Leg 1: Thunderstorms where the rain was said to resemble riding into the output of a fire hose for extended periods of time. Snowstorms engulfed areas around the rider before they had time to ride to lower altitudes. High winds which made just mounting the bike and getting it rolling a challenge, not to mention maintaining control to keep the bike in the correct lane. Those chasing high altitude points found ice forming on road surfaces and traction evaporating almost instantly. Close lightning strikes caused several riders to temporarily abandon the chase and seek shelter. Temperatures dropping below freezing, then rising to comfortable levels, and dropping to below freezing again faster than riders were able to add or remove electrics or adjust the temperature of their grip or seat heaters. And of course, temperatures in the desert southwest holding steady at more than 115F for hours.

Jerald Anderson is out with health issues. He is expected to be OK, but just could not continue. Those of us who are two-stroke fans...and fans of Jerald...are sad to see him and the old 1974 Suzuki "Water Buffalo" 750 two-stroke triple to withdraw.

Jim Owen arrived at the checkpoint looking good, although frustrated by the auxiliary fuel transfer problem. IBR veteran and famous Ninja 250 guru, Leon Begeman, found the apparent cause. With some fresh parts IBR vet Matt Watkins provided, the problem is hopefully resolved. Jim also swapped the rear wheel for fresh rubber.



Matt Watkins and Rusty Bachman are local IBR vets who have been assisting riders in a variety of ways at the checkpoint. Matt has housed tons of rider shipped gear for the past few months and hauled it all to the checkpoint for those riders.

Besides being a nice guy, Rusty is a great mechanic. He has a tire changer, along with a trailer full of tools and spares, set up in the parking lot. Most of the riders planning a tire change had it scheduled for the return to the checkpoint, so Rusty's crew and the tire machine did not see as much action on Thursday evening as one might expect. Still, they assisted a number of riders with a variety of issues until late in the night.



*Note the screen showing current SPOTWALLA tracks to those patiently waiting in the parking lot*

Matt also provided the Wellers with a loaner Garmin GPS after their unit gave up on Leg 1.

Chris Purney had some low life try to break into his left saddlebag somewhere during Leg 1. The perp was unsuccessful, but rendered the lock unusable, meaning Chris could not get access to his heated clothing. To add to his woes, both aftermarket headlight bulbs failed, forcing Chris to run with just his driving lights. Matt and Rusty created a work around fix for the saddle bag lock and access, plus replaced the bulbs in the headlights. Chris was able to go to his room with a burden off his shoulders and hopefully relax for some much needed rest.

Cliff Wall arrived on the borrowed Super Tenere and related his frustration with the attempt to rig “highway pegs” on the bike. Cliff is probably close to 7 feet tall and wanted to have a way to stretch his legs on Bill Thweatt’s Tenere. They installed a length of 5/16” all-thread in Greenville, just prior to the start. Some of us did not think it was going to work, but it was the best option available at the time.

Cliff was pleased to report that it worked great, but not as highway pegs. The proximity to the engine exhaust pipes turned the all-thread into a close approximation of a soldering iron. The hastily fabricated, start line parking lot farkle did not work for resting his feet at all, but even if it had, it would have melted his boots. Rumor had it he was considering a patent for the unintended invention, but in the meantime, if anyone needs some wiring soldered, catch up with Cliff while the bike is still warm.

John Coons was found busy in the parking lot performing a tire change, replacing the speedometer cable to get his odometer to start working again, and other TLC items a 25-year-old BMW needs to hold up under the pressure of 11 days with Coons as pilot.



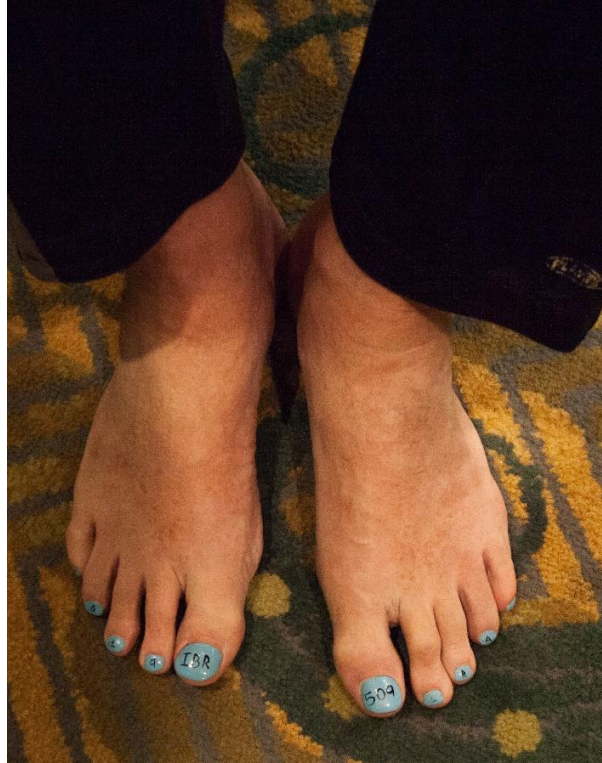
There were a lot of riders who pushed unusually hard on Leg 1 and it showed on their faces at the checkpoint. There were a surprising number arriving at the checkpoint early, but even some of those riders looked very tired. Most of those arriving close to, and within, the penalty window looked like the proverbial meat-on-a-stick as a result of covering a lot of miles, in less than ideal weather conditions, on their way to the Checkpoint.



Craig Brooks looking fresh after Leg 1, along with Eric Chernin and Shirley Davis, two-up on a Wing.



The FJR brothers, Corey and Brian Nuehring.  
(please don't tell the the top cases do not match until after the rally)



Paul Slaton showing off his IBR pedicure.



Not sure, but the caption seems to want to be "Really?"  
IBR vets Danny Dossman and Ian McPhee.



No Ian, get your own sandwich!  
We did not plan to put a photo of Ian in this report twice,  
but wanted to include IBR vet and world traveler Margaret Peart.



1000 yard stare...from hungry rookie Robert Carlo. Two-digit IBA # veteran Patrick Smith waiting.



Everyone is hungry on arrival, some dive in and some think it through.  
Vets Eric Bray and Mike Myren.



Two bike team of Lynda and Terry Lahman prepping for scoring.



Seeking Total World Domination, Team Strange's John Coons, Mike Heitkamp, and Ron Messick in the queue for scoring.



IBR vet Bill Watt checking in Jim Winterer and Lisa Erbes.



Are Eric and Shirley texting each other?



IBR vet Brian Roberts being incredibly patient with the team of rookie Lisa Cover Rufo and her dad, IBR vet Martin Cover...who seems to be calmly sitting back, spectator to the apparently intense discussion.



IBR vet Greg Fizer appears to have received shocking news in the scoring room.





IBR vet Tim Masterson scoring Martin Little and Rebecca McCallum.



Dan Roth handling a tire swap. Gotta love those single sided swing arms!



The older V-twin show arriving, vet Chris Comly on the Sportster and vet Dylan Spink on the 650 Silverwing.



Wolfe Bonham hauling some terra-not-so-firma.



The last of the ST1300 arrivals, former IBR winner Eric Jewel and rookie Steve Gallant.



The Chris and Chris penalty window arrival show. Rooney and Purney were the last riders into the checkpoint. They had less than 20 minutes to present themselves for scoring.



4:00 a.m. Friday morning. Rally Architect Jeff Earls...about to rock the world of the 2019 riders.



Tobie Stevens capturing the moment of the shock and awe announcement at the rider meeting:

Say what?!...YHGTBKM!...REALLY?...oh, crap!...mic drop!

No, none of that was said...just a few groans and silence as the news was slowly absorbed through the 4:00 a.m. fog of tired brains which were suffering from not enough time for the coffee to have kicked in.



Did he just say what I think he said?  
Well, that may not have been said either,  
but pretty sure it sums up what most  
in the room were thinking at the time.



“Did you see their faces?”

Note the term “Checkpoint” is now being used in the report without the 1 or 2 designation. There is no Checkpoint 2 with the typical check-in, scoring, rest time, and handout of new rally packs. Checkpoint 2 is now just something to be collected as a bonus and must be claimed on the bonus form. Riders have the option to claim the Kennewick bonus, or drop the bonus and collect others, including many combination opportunities.

The rally packs were handed out, and riders were told they now had all the remaining bonuses for the rally. Riders headed to their rooms where they worked to understand the implications of the available options and piece together the best available choices for the long last leg of the rally.

Which roads would become the ones not taken?  
Which would become the one to make all the difference?

With so much information to process, much of it outside of the constraints and distances the riders had been thinking about for the past few months, there were over 40 rally bikes still in the hotel parking lot at 10:00 a.m., 6 hours later. Eric Jewell left around 11:40 a.m.; Jeff’s puzzle caused many other perplexed riders to stay much longer.



4am came early for this group and two riders overslept, missing the rider meeting. Dan Roth arrived in the lobby several minutes after the rider meeting ended, apologizing profusely to the Rallymaster. Despite his tardiness, Dan may have an advantage over some other riders, as he already mounted a fresh tire on his BMW GS. Many riders may be limited to a return to Kennewick on Sunday due to not having scheduled their tire change to be done at the first checkpoint opportunity.

Andy Mackey slept until almost mid-day. He looked a bit fried on Thursday night, despite insisting he felt good. He looked much better after getting some good rest, but he was extremely upset with himself for oversleeping. Staff assured him he was better off to have gotten that good R.E.M. sleep and start late, than to have gotten up early, tried to plan while still exhausted, and then find himself needing to stop and sleep in some less than ideal location a couple of hours down the road. Not sure he believed us.



Wendy Crocket departed the checkpoint looking amazingly fresh.



Merril Campbell departing the checkpoint on the first and only KTM in the IBR. He experienced more tire wear than expected, as did many other riders. You will notice there is a lid on the right side saddlebag. It was not there on his arrival at the checkpoint. Lost it somewhere along his route. A replacement was obtained, avoiding the need for duct tape and plywood.



Kurt Worden on the 300 Versys departing the checkpoint. Looking good, despite more than 10 drops...and subsequent lifts...in the snow and ice on Beartooth Pass. Some bruises and soreness, some torn riding gear and broken plastic, but in much better condition than expected, proving once again, the man is a machine.

William Buskell was the second rider out the door. He said he was going north. When reminded by the Rallymaster to cancel his hotel reservation if he was not returning to Kennewick, he said he was going to wait and see if Canada would allow him to cross the border first. Based on his Spotwalla tracks, it seems likely he needed to cancel that room.

Eric Edelman called Rally Central not long after his departure from the hotel and let the staff know he is not feeling well and is withdrawing from the rally. Since Eric is a physician, rally staff believes he made a wise choice.

## Historical Perspective

An option to drop a checkpoint and create a longer than expected leg has not been available in an Iron Butt Rally in nearly two decades, since the epic 2001 Rally and the infamous 2003 Rally. The 2019 rally has an “old school” flavor, updated with modern technology.

The current Rallymaster, Lisa Landry, was a rookie in the 2001 IBR, as was your scribe. The rally designer, Jeff Earls, was riding his first IBR as a vet, having collected his 3-digit IBA number in the 1999 IBR. Prior to the '01 rally, there were rumors of a bonus at Prudhoe Bay, Alaska, but when the checkpoint info came out, everyone who ran the numbers knew there was not enough time on Leg 3 to leave Sunnyside, Washington, get to Prudhoe Bay, and still make it to the Gorham, Maine checkpoint on time.

At the '01 start banquet in Madison, Alabama, Iron Butt Association President Mike Kneebone asked for all the riders who *would go to Alaska, if it were possible*, to stand up. Maybe 2/3 of the riders stood. A few were serious, but several of the others may have thought it was a safe bet to stand, as it was clearly not possible, given the time between checkpoints. No one was expecting what Mike Kneebone was about to do.

There were some shocked faces, accompanied by low murmurs, when he announced there were no mandatory checkpoints for anyone who rode to Prudhoe Bay in Alaska and made it back to the start in Madison, Alabama. Riders would be able to skip the Pomona, Sunnyside, and Gorham checkpoints. There turned out to be a lot more riders caught standing up than the number of riders who rode to Alaska.

But there was another twist in the offering: The name of the Prudhoe Bay bonus, on Leg 1, was “Might Win” and it was worth 500,000 points. The riders were informed there *might be* equal or higher value bonuses offered later in the rally. Some of us, including Jeff and your scribe, waited to see what that option might be.

No high value options were revealed at the Pomona checkpoint. But sure enough, the second twist was revealed at the Sunnyside, Washington, checkpoint for Leg 3. If a rider left Sunnyside and went to Alaska, they could skip the final checkpoint in Gorham, Maine. It would also guarantee a Gold medal finish if they arrived back in Alabama in time. The Prudhoe Bay bonus read “Winner” and was worth 1,000,000 points. ONE MILLION!!!!

Your scribe took the road to Alaska in 2001, and it made all the difference.

The riders who took the first option on Leg 1, *MIGHT WIN*, were riding southbound on the Alaska Highway coming back from Prudhoe Bay, and found themselves meeting a few IBR riders heading north, in the opposite direction. Their minds were racing at the possibilities, trying to determine what other bonuses might still be available in the states to help offset whatever the northbound riders were planning to collect. Shane Smith rode past the finish, all the way to Key West, before returning to Alabama only to fall short to winner Bob Hall.

The 2003 IBR was the infamous Red Pill – Blue Pill rally, which Kneebone based loosely on the movie “*The Matrix*”. At the first checkpoint in Primm, Nevada, riders walked, one by one, to the front of the room, in front of everyone, and picked a red pill or a blue pill. Red for a high placing route, blue for finisher status.



Blue pill riders were given a conventional bonus listing to the next planned checkpoint in Lake City, Florida. Red pill riders were presented an abbreviated listing directing them to Lake Isabella, California, for another gathering the next evening.

In Lake Isabella riders were given yet another choice: head to Bella Coola, British Columbia, skip the Lake City checkpoint, and head to Gorham, Maine for checkpoint 3, or ride the next 24 hours to Santa Fe, New Mexico, for another set of choices.

In Primm, riders were told by Kneebone over and over: if you want to win, choose the red pill. Many ignored that advice to their detriment. But for the next two choices, no guidance was provided by staff on the relative merits. Choose what's in your hand or behind door #2. All riders re-united at checkpoint 3 in Gorham, Maine, for a shared Leg 4 bonus listing.

For a few years after the 2001 and 2003 rallies, riders speculated on the possibility of whether the upcoming rally would have the option to drop a checkpoint. After a while, when it did not happen, most seemed to forget about it. Some new riders may have never even read the old reports. There was no significant chatter about the possibility of a dropped checkpoint prior to the 2019 event. Everyone was expecting a 2017 style puzzle, just on steroids. Jeff made a masterful decision to bring back an old school style event with the twist of the dropped checkpoint to keep the riders on their toes.

We will be posting the complete Leg 1 Bonus Listing, along with the points page, on the IBR website so everyone can try their hand at coming up with a winning route. Perhaps the only unknown would be whether your route could be ridden in the kind of weather the 2019 riders encountered on Leg 1.

Just to whet your appetite for the listing, we have included one of the Leg 1 bonuses below:

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**MONTK      9073 points**

Montauk  
Lighthouse  
Lighthouse  
Road  
Montauk, NY  
41.0719, -71.8591  
Daylight



From the parking area, walk east toward the lighthouse to find the "Montauk Point Lighthouse" sign.

Montauk Light was the first lighthouse in New York State and is the fourth-oldest active lighthouse in the US.

*Take a photo of the "Montauk Point Lighthouse - Commissioned by President George Washington" sign with the Montauk Lighthouse in the background.*

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To paraphrase a character played by the great western philosopher Clint Eastwood:

A person has got to know their limitations. Do you feel lucky? Well, do ya?

The last leg of the 2019 Iron Butt Rally is sure to be very interesting. Stay tuned, more as we know it. The riders and their bikes are starting to feel the effects of 6 days on the road. If it was easy, anyone could do it.

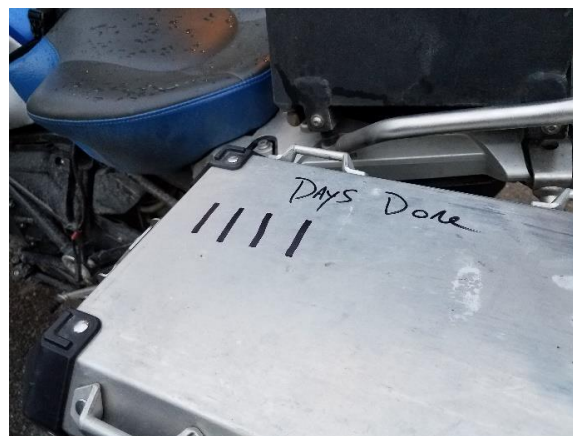
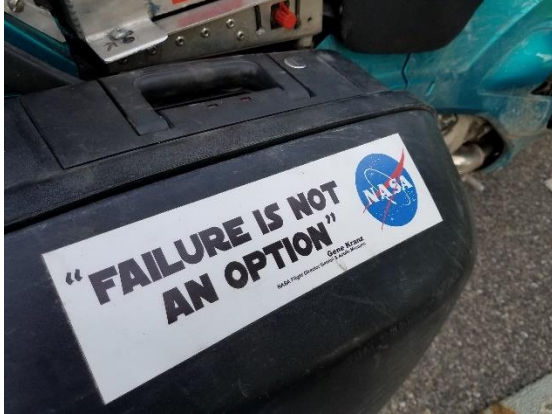
A few more checkpoint photos for your entertainment:



Mike and Tess, Wendy's two biggest fans.



Volunteers Bill Watt and Paul Tong...checkpoint roommates! What could go wrong?



*Photos by IBR scouting volunteers, Tobie Stevens, John Harrison (the really good ones are from Tobie)*

*John Harrison  
IBR Scribe  
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