

Saturday June 15 Day -2 Defined path, queuing up, quick fixes

Today's check in lines are about as close together as most IBR competitors will be to each other for the next 12 days. There are lines of riders queued up for what staff hopes will be short waits to complete the various steps required for check in. Rallymaster Lisa has an army of volunteers loaded up on coffee, pens in hand, computers and forms at the ready, all to try and make the process as quick and efficient as possible.



Tim Masterson and Nancy Oswald reported a relatively smooth day at the odometer verification station under the hotel portico. The 29.9625 mile defined route here in sunny South Carolina was simple to follow. Riders did not have to navigate a repeat of the most excellent traffic construction features provided by the Minnesota taxpayers during the 2017 event. I should say relatively simple, as there were 6 riders, including Kenneth Andrews, Craig Brooks, Jeffrey Gebler, and Roy Kjendal who had an issue on their first try and had to repeat the lap. But to their credit, no one had to ride a third lap. Roy's fuel cell was a bit overfilled and the midday heat caused a bit of overflow, but the issue was quickly resolved.

One vet, Marty Cover, someone who knows the ropes, or should, lost his completed and signed odometer check form somewhere between his bike and the check in table. Since he could not find it, he did the odometer check a second time. His original odometer form was, of course, found on the floor after he left for another loop around the course.

Another rider, a vet, a legend in the community, and a former winner of the rally was one of the riders to need a second lap. Very uncharacteristic for Eric Jewell. In his defense, he has not rallied in 4 years, so

a bit of rust around the edges might be expected. Always looking at the positive aspect of things, Eric told me it was a good wake up call to get his head in the game and read every line of the instructions.

An additional upside: Eric did abide by the namesake “Jewell and Crane rule” dating from 2017. Those two very experienced competitors delighted in showing up at the last possible moment for rally check in. The rule was instated to require riders to start check in on Saturday or present themselves for check in at 7:45 am on Sunday morning, ending the opportunity for any last minute Sunday appearances.

Eric was also OK with having an auxiliary tank transfer issue during the trip to Greenville. He stopped along the way, took everything apart, found the defective quick disconnect, replaced it, and was glad the problem showed up prior to being on the clock. Maybe all the rust has been brushed aside. In any case, staff could not ask for a rider with a better attitude than Eric Jewell.

Nancy also relayed a story of one rider asking if there was a bonus for doing the course in the least amount of time. She kindly let him know there was a police officer sitting somewhere along the course with a radar gun to provide any riders who wanted an award with exactly that.

According to the reports coming in to Rally Central, most lines inside the Marriott were moving quickly, with few glitches. A few rookies experienced some confusion during parts of the process, but many of the staffers commented on how great the attitudes were from most riders. Even including those who may not have had the smoothest check in experience. In fact, some of us think this group of rookies, overall, is shaping up to be one of the better groups in recent years. Now, before they all read this and develop random cases of excessive effrontery, it remains to be seen if they can successfully route and ride for 11 days. But most are, by today’s observations, off to an excellent start. Good show!





Perhaps the area of most concern for several riders would be the verification of camera settings and camera cards. Around 20% of the field had issues with proper function and formatting of their cameras or cards. Why would this be concerning? It is not possible to become a finisher of the IBR without being able to properly document the bonuses a rider puts in the time and effort to attempt on their way to collect enough points to meet the finisher threshold. It would follow that a rider with at least 14 months to prepare should be well versed in the operation and formatting functions of their camera. Given the critical nature of photo documentation, perhaps camera acumen should become as much of a priority as aux fuel or that third set of LED driving lights.



Of course, when a rider has successfully completed check in, including verifying their satellite tracker's ability to communicate with Rally Central's computers, it might not be prudent to change the URL of the confirmed tracker account. Jon Kerr, who some may recall from the 2017 IBR, is returning to try to earn finisher status. We won't take time to recount the events which prevented him from finishing in 2017, but it might be worth a look back at the reports, if you do not recall the story.

Jon somehow felt the need to make the change to his unit after completing check in. He seems to be handling things with a good attitude and at last report, is working with the rally staff to get the communication re-established, as having an active tracker is a requirement. It is tough enough having the DNF monkey going along for the ride, without creating additional problems. Hopefully, Jon can shed that burden with a successful ride this time.

Rally designer Jeff Earls revealed the IBR posters early this morning. As the poster reveal and speculation on the rally theme have become a tradition in IBR lore, many riders have been scouring the posters today for clues about the rally theme and potential destinations. No doubt everyone has marked Mt. Evans on their maps. It is the highest paved road in the nation. The last time I rode my motorcycle there, we encountered a brutal, gale force wind, requiring us to carefully navigate the parking lot and make sure our bikes were facing into the blast, just to keep them from being blown over. The access road is subject to be closed to motorcycle traffic at any time due to high winds, or snow and ice at the higher elevations.



As if posters being read like tea leaves was not enough, a few folks wondered if there was a subliminal message to be gleaned from the tech inspection table being set up in a section of unused handicapped parking spaces. Probably not, but apparently there was less than normal drama during the tech sessions in the parking lot, at least for most riders.

A “what the heck is this?” comment from Dale is not what one expects to hear when Jim Owen rolls his Beemer up for tech inspection. Who would think Jim’s bike would be the poster child for how to NOT mount an auxiliary fuel tank?



Fortunately, the world has not spun off its axis. Jim's cell was properly bolted and secured to the subframe. The zip ties have nothing to do with tank mounting and are used to stabilize his back rest in the proper position. As one would expect, Jim's bike passed tech just fine, but we are not done mentioning Jim in this daily report.

As the prior comments on Eric Jewell demonstrated, no one, not even long distance legends, is safe from the reach of the Rally Central moles. Rookies can take heart in the fact a methodical, near robot-like master of rallying, two-time IBR winner, and one of the nicest guys you could want to meet, is still

human and on rare occasions does miss a packing checklist item. Jim forgot his passport. Is this where the new kids say “drop the mike”? Not really.

Vets do not get rattled by such things; they calmly go about finding a way to remedy the situation. Which is just what Jim did. However, when he found out his wife’s flight was canceled, he did ask Rallymaster Lisa Landry if she had anything to do with the situation.

Jim is not the only rider trying to get a passport delivered in time. Andy Mackey gets a mention in the reports for the second day in a row, this time for not packing his passport. Last report we had indicated Andy was trying to find out what USPS did with the rush package. Hopefully he will find the package in time for the start on Monday.

And speaking of attempting to pull success from the jaws of defeat, we have an update on Dan Simmonds. It is our understanding the replacement TPS unit arrived and was installed at the dealership. However, the service personnel found the oil to be contaminated from a significant amount of aluminum during the routine oil change. The bike is not rideable, pending further diagnosis.

Readers may recall a comment in yesterday’s report about the Iron Butt family be a great group of riders. That has been confirmed again today. The latest reports indicate IBR vet, current IBR staff volunteer, and all around nice guy Bill Thweatt has offered his nearly identical Tenere to Dan for the rally. Apparently, Dan is in the process of completing check in with Bill’s bike and moving some of his equipment over to Bill’s bike. Hopefully, all Dan needs to do is get some rest and get himself refocused on the rally.

Mike Best was the recipient of bad news at tech, but nothing unsur-mount-able. The mount for his auxiliary fuel tank was deemed to have too much flex. Eric Vallaincourt offered some suggestions for options to strengthen the mounting brackets. Local spectator Mark Wood had previously offered to assist any rider needing tools or an extra set of hands in the parking lot, so he was summoned to assist. Last we heard; Mike had added some bracing to the mount. As this is being written, it is not clear if the upgrade operation has passed the “Dale test”. Latest update: Dale informed us Eric V. had checked and approved Mike’s structural enhancement.





We have late word about another bike problem. Apparently, Cliff Wall had an unknown issue with his Honda Goldwing and is at the dealership now trying to get a resolution that will keep him in the rally. More as we know it. Inserting our last update as we get ready to post: There is more to the Cliff and Dan bike issues, which needs to be acknowledged. Right after Bill Thweatt offered his Super Tenere to Dan, Bill's friend Cliff called him asking about the possibility of borrowing Bill's bike, if the dealership could not repair Cliff's Wing.

When Cliff heard about Dan's problems and learned Bill had already offered his Tenere to Dan, Cliff insisted that Bill convince Dan to take Bill's Tenere. We do not have the exact quote but are told it was something along the line of "That Aussie needs to ride the rally on your Tenere, make sure he does." Dan is not an Aussie, but Cliff was likely thinking about the epic solo lap of Australia ridden recently by Dan.

Cliff will not know the fate of his own bike until around 6:30 this evening, so for him to insist on another rider taking the bike that could have been his back up really shows how riders in the community take care of each other.

We are hopeful the old adage "no good deed goes unpunished" does NOT apply here. Cliff and Bill both deserve kudos for stepping up unselfishly to help a fellow rider. We hope Cliff comes up with a positive solution and is able to start the rally on Monday morning.

There is word indicating IBR vet Gregg Lenentine got a call from Mike Kneebone this evening. Mike wanted to know if Gregg planned to compete the registration process. Gregg is reported to have said he thought he was done. However, he had not turned in his paperwork and had not had the talk with Mike,

both of which are needed to complete check in. Gregg probably did not want to be in today's report, but we don't always get what we want.

We are hoping all the riders resolve any issues they may have struggled with today and get good sleep after tonight's banquet. It may be the last opportunity they have to get rested in a comfortable bed for a few days.

On the evening of Day -2 in 2017, I summarized at least 3 of the rider's options for the evening of Day -1. Those options are the same in 2019, so I will repost them here:

"Option 1: Sleep too much and miss out on significant planning and points-gathering opportunities.

Option 2: Spend so much time producing a plan that looks great on the laptop, but results in getting too little sleep to be able to ride that plan.

Option 3: Know when good enough is good enough for a short leg, save the file, and get some good rest to be fresh."

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