

Wednesday June 19 Day 3 Early Attrition

Veteran Todd Witte messaged your scribe after reading the Day 2 report. He asked if any rally staff would be time barred for a late arrival at the Checkpoint. While an exhaustive review of the current rulebook is somewhat difficult while rolling on the floor laughing, we have determined there currently no criteria for being time barred, nor penalty points, which apply to rally staff. However, there are such things which apply to riders. An early morning check of Spotwalla would suggest the unfortunate possibility of those rules being applied at Checkpoint 1 here in Kennewick, WA.

The Rallymaster's phone has been on the charger for the past several hours, as the volume of calls from riders is starting to strain the capacity of local cell towers...and that does not count the call-in bonuses.

Angelo Patacca intended to be in and out quickly, so he left the 2015 BMW R1200GSA running in the parking lot on top of Mt. Evans last night. He snapped his photo and was stowing his flag in the top case when a sudden snowstorm started dumping slick white stuff on him...and the road. The temperature was below freezing.

He made it down from the top of the 14,260 foot mountain in the snowstorm, in the dark, on a narrow, twisty road with no guardrails. He stopped at a McDonalds off I-70 in Idaho Springs, Colorado, to warm up with a cup of coffee. He turned the BMW off. It would not restart. The problem seems to be another electronic key fob issue. The spare key failed to work. The call for assistance brought forth the info he needed to get into the bike and get it started with the "back-up" procedure, but the required lengthy process is not sustainable under rally clock pressure. Angelo was going to Denver, hoping the BMW dealership would be able to resolve the issue. At last report, the dealer had diagnosed a failing battery in the fob – the same battery that had been replaced at a dealer just two weeks prior.

It does not take much imagination to consider the potential consequences for Angelo had his BMW's failure to start happened at 14,260 feet in a snowstorm, with nighttime temps dropping below freezing, not counting wind chill. There is a bit of shelter up there, but not much.

Side note from your scribe: if you are ever in Idaho Springs, Colorado, plan a stop to eat at Beau Jo's Pizza. Located in a historic old hardware building from the early mining days, it is interesting, and the pizza is great.

Veteran IBR rider Mike Hutsal is not riding in this rally, but he was on his way from Canada to Checkpoint 1 with intentions of assisting fellow Canadian Maura Gatensby with a tire change on her 2012 Honda ST1300. Thankfully, Mike was not on one of his motorcycles. The deer strike set off the air bags in his VW Touareg and rendered it undrivable, but the front end damage would have made that impossible anyway. As far as we know, he is OK, but will not get to Checkpoint 1 in time to assist Maura.

Veteran Matt Watkins is also not riding, but several riders in the rally are depending on Matt being at Checkpoint 1. He is local to the area and volunteered to serve as a ship-to point for more than a half dozen riders needing supplies, tires, and other assistance for the next leg of the rally. He will be bringing a truck load of stuff to the hotel tomorrow. We understand he also plans to assist Maura with her tire change.

A rider called Lisa from Yellowstone National Park around 2:00 a.m. He was having trouble getting a photo of the steam eruption. If he had been closer to the Rallymaster's hotel he would not have had trouble seeing an eruption, it just would not have been Old Faithful. He could not bring his bike close enough for the lights to help. Apparently, he did not have a powerful flashlight to supply the necessary photons. Or perhaps his camera was not capable of taking low light photos. Or perhaps he did not know how to adjust the settings on the camera to achieve the desired effect. Staff is not sure why a rider would try to get a bonus at 2:00 a.m., in a location with no streetlights, without having the ability to shed adequate light on the subject.

The rider then wanted to know if his Spot track would suffice for claiming the bonus, if he stayed there long enough to cover the length of time between eruptions. Of course, the answer was no. The answer would have been no to any other rider also, because of the rally rules for collecting bonuses. We do not know at this time if the rider found a way to light up the eruption, the one at Yellowstone, or not.

Lew Ballard reported experiencing a fuel pump issue on his 2018 HD Ultra about 75 miles west of Butte, Montana. He indicated he would be heading back east to Butte for repairs. Later reports indicate they had him fixed up and out of there in about an hour.

The first Call-In bonus is open today. Giel Kerkhof may set a record for being mentioned in every daily report. Giel reported being near Mt. Rushmore and said it was his next planned bonus, if he could find it. He reported struggling with the settings on his GPS units. Hopefully, he can get some rest, clear his mind, and work the problem out at the checkpoint. Someone on staff suggested no one needs a GPS to find Mt. Rushmore, but in Giel's defense, the staff member had a good night's sleep, did not deal with a highway speed tire failure the day prior, and was not from Portugal. Giel did not hang up immediately after his call-in, so we were able to hear him talking to himself in a rather colorful manner regarding his GPS issues.

Late report: Sadly, Giel is withdrawing due to the frustration with his GPS issues.

Andy Hall is out of the rally due to a deer strike causing significant damage to his Gold Wing. Hoping to stay in the rally, he tried to find a donor bike near his location for parts to facilitate repairs. Late reports confirm he could not find anything available.



Most of the call-in messages were logged in the style of Sergeant Friday from Dragnet, "Just the facts, ma'am." However, some of the riders took the time to offer more info about their condition, or vent to the staff, or offer a bit of needed entertainment for those of us riding a keyboard in a hotel instead of a motorcycle on fun roads in a great rally.

James Epley said he was excited to place his first ever IBR call-in for bonus points. Apparently, he was so pumped that he told us he was going to *Bluetooth* Pass for his next bonus. We are pretty sure he was planning to go to Beartooth Pass and was just a little too excited.

Bill Cumbie is doing well, however, his auxiliary fuel tank is not transferring fuel during the high daytime temperatures. It is reported to be working fine at night. We suspect a high bend in the aux fuel transfer hose is allowing a heat generated vapor lock for form in the tubing arch. Hopefully, he can re-route the line at the checkpoint and resolve the issue.

Jerry Anderson is out of the rally, citing severe back pain. The Rallymaster sends her condolences – that's not a fun situation.

Jesse Lucas made a smart decision to call back and leave a second call-in message, as the first one was void of voice communication.

Rookie Marcel Bialt, stated he was doing fine, however he suggested someone ask him about suicidal frogs, pissed off owls, angry alligators, slippery diesel fuel, and the other great adventures he has already experienced on Day 3. Welcome to the Iron Butt Rally!

Kevin Gardner noted his last bonus was Montauk, Long Island in NY. He was calling from Lincoln, Nebraska, and his next bonus was going to be Old Faithful in Yellowstone. A quick check of the numbers has him averaging one bonus per every 1100+ miles since yesterday. He is not the only one, either. Very reminiscent of 2001 and 2003 style rallies. Sit there and twist that. Kevin called back several hours later to note a change in the next bonus he planned to get. Not sure why he made the change, but it should become apparent in next day or so.

Connie Gabrick gave us all a scare by reporting she hit a deer. She paused for effect, then told us someone else was kind enough to hit the deer before she did. The carcass did provide quite the launching ramp for the 2009, 160,000+ mile, 800+ pound Victory Vision. Connie said she got some air and apparently took full advantage of the Nimitz class wheelbase (65.7 inches) of the Victory to stick the landing with only a slight bobble before resuming a straight line. Where is the Red Bull GoPro crew when you need them? No doubt sleep for Connie would need to wait, due to the extra dose of adrenaline flowing through her system.

Everyone should check out Bruce Edward's phone set up, whatever it might be. The call connection clarity sounded like he might have been in the hotel room next door.

Justin Long produces the Long Riders Podcast when not riding his 2015 FJR1300. He decided to put his broadcast skills to work on the call-in opportunity. There is a link to the audio file on the IBR site.

Wolfe Bonham attempted a Yosemite Sam impersonation in honor of several riders back at the start hotel who told him they were going to the Old Faithful bonus in Yosemite National Park. He found those riders plans very amusing, as Old Faithful is located within Yellowstone National Park in Wyoming, about

850 miles away from Yosemite, which is in California. We did not attach the link for the mp3 file, as the connection was poor, resulting in less than optimal audio quality.

Late update: Wolfe called back from a better cell location. The link to the audio file is on the IBR website.

Billy Connacher seemed glad he made the trip to the top of Mt. Evans, but admitted it was a “stich crapper” of a road. He also was emphatic the points assigned to Delicate Arch bonus, located in the Utah desert north of Moab, were not nearly enough for the effort required. He thought he was going to have a coronary while hiking to the photo point while wearing full riding gear in the desert heat. He also admitted to cursing Jeff and Lisa multiple times during those two bonus collection efforts. Rally staff thinks the arch hike might have been a great opportunity to let that crapped in ‘stich air out a bit.

For those following who may not get the “stich reference, it is the long distance community’s shorthand for Aerostich riding suits. Andy Goldfine’s company has been a great supporter of the long distance community and the IBR for many years. Perhaps more riders have finished the IBR wearing one of the versions of Andy’s Roadcrafter riding suits than any other brand of gear.

Chris Comly reported riding his Harley Frankensporty to the top of Mt. Evans, where there was ice on the road and the “winds from hell” were blowing. He planned a stop in Wyoming to get some work performed on his brakes before resuming bonus hunting.



Robert Lightner provided his info and then speculated about being the rookie with the lowest efficiency for the entire first leg of the rally. Perhaps fortunately for Robert, there are no points for efficiency.

Peter Green reported having “fun putting it down”. Knowing Peter, that statement could have any number of meanings. We will take it that he is putting down the miles to arrive at the checkpoint on time and with enough points. No word on any repeats of the start line failure to crank issue with his Triumph Trophy triple, so we will take that as good news also.

Nancy Lefcourt lamented lots of road construction, encountering rain yesterday which resembled riding into a fire hose discharge, and capturing video of a herd over 100 bison moving through Yellowstone.

Jim Burriss only recorded the basic information required in a businesslike manner, but your scribe appreciated hearing the South Carolina accent after a couple of days being away from the Deep South.

Dan Crowley indicated he was a bit tired, but still having a great time.

Dylan Spink wisely made a second call, as the first message file did not contain any information. Overall, the number of back-up, second calls made by riders was surprisingly low for the first few hours of the call-in opportunity. We would surmise the riders are taking time to review and confirm what was recorded and finding it OK, not bothering with a second call.

Corey Nuehring was the second rider to call in and report riding *Bluetooth* Pass, but he caught the error and corrected it to *Beartooth* Pass. His brother and teammate with the matching FJR, Brian, made no mention of riding a *Bluetooth* Pass during his call.

Gregg Lenentine mentioned 3 things during his call: 1 - It was hot in the southwest! 2 - His back is feeling better (he was having spasms just before the start). 3 - He stopped in Tallahassee, Florida to get a new battery and put his mind at ease after needing RenoJohn (John Austin of the Big Money Rally) to help him bump start the 2010 FJR 1300 to get it running in time for Dale's starting wave.

Greg Dennett lamented riding in more rain in the past two days than he ever remembered riding in before. He also rode *Beartooth* Parkway in the snow. He said he was still having a great time on the 2002 Honda ST1100. Before the FJR1300 and ST1300, the old Honda ST1100 was arguably the premier sport touring platform for long distance riding. The fact that no one considers a 17 year old ST11 to be a hopeless class entry in the IBR is a testament to the strength of the bike's reputation and longevity.

John Kerr called in a second time, which was good, as the first time did not have any audio recorded.

Lynda Weller called in for the Kevin/Lynda two-up team. These IBR Vets are so positive, reporting to be having a "great time". They relayed they had dropped the bike yesterday (somewhere in Montana, if the message was understood correctly) in a low speed turn with a dip. There are not many people in some parts of Montana, but somehow the right person happened to show up. He was apparently strong enough to pick up the Super Tenere for them, "all by himself". It sounded like Lynda was impressed by the strong good Samaritan, so Kevin may want to hit the weight room with a bit more enthusiasm after the rally.

The other reported incident involved a "lovely" truck driver who rear ended them on the Super Tenere. Remember they reported having a "great time"? It was not a hard hit, just a "nudge". Apparently the "lovely" truck driver became a "bit cross" during the ensuing conversation. But, despite these setbacks, this two-up couple from Great Britain is still having a "great time". Gotta love that!

Jim Owen noted his aux fuel is not transferring due to apparent vapor lock, the same problem Bill Cumbie mentioned during his call-in. We would expect the fix for Jim's issue would be similar to the fix mentioned for Bill's.

Mike Heitkamp's third call-in worked. Persistence pays off when points are on the line.

John Coons added he is "Having fun!". Apparently one of the front brake discs on the 25 year old BMW oil head, with 202,532 miles on the odometer, had just about enough of slowing John down. He called from Yellowstone. If the details were understood correctly, Mike Heitkamp's dad has Ian McPhee's spare front wheel on the trailer behind his truck. The truck and trailer are at the north entrance to Yellowstone on the way to West Yellowstone. John and Mike's dad have planned to meet in West Yellowstone. The workplace where they plan to meet is a shop owned by the son of 2011 IBR winner

Peter Behm. The shop has the facilities needed to swap the wheels. In addition, Spokane BMW has been contacted and will leave the parts for repairing John's disc outside their shop for him to pick up, when he gets there by riding on Ian's loaner wheel. Even the "A-Team" could not have pulled this off on their best day! Don't you just love it when a plan comes together?



Lisa Erbes called in for the Winterer/Erbes two-up team. The first call was an attempt to fill the staff in on what a great time they were having, but the reception for connections from the Yellowstone area is poor and the message was garbled. By the fourth attempt, Lisa sounded a bit terse and did not take any time to try and give the staff a recap on their fun. She clearly just wanted to get the required call-in bonus info transmitted successfully. We would expect by this time, they are both back to having fun on their FJR.

Also making 4 call-in attempts was Rookie Lisa Rufo. She seemed to be very pleased with finding the only Chick-fil-A in Las Vegas and getting a break from her dad's (rider Marty Cover) preference for McDonalds.

Steve Diederich and Micki Denton reported encountering 3 different hailstorms in Kansas yesterday. They were looking forward to Yellowstone and are no doubt glad they are not in Kansas anymore.

Don Stadtler's HD Softtail was diagnosed with a bad stator. The HD shop in Salt Lake City had a stator available, but they told him it would take 3 hours and they could not get to it. He called the Rallymaster, who used to be a HD rider (check the 2001 IBR finisher stats). She told him she had replaced several Harley stators (they apparently fail frequently) and it could be done in an hour, in the parking lot if necessary. When Don went back to the dealership, they conceded it could be done in an hour, but would not do it in the parking lot, and must not have been willing to free up a shop bay for a rally rider on the clock and in need of help. He was finally told they could get to it tomorrow at 9:00 a.m., which should have him on the road just after 10:00 a.m. He plans to take his rest bonus tonight and be there in the morning.

Paul Slaton is one of the few riders in the country who has experienced an ECM failure on the normally rock solid FJR1300 platform. So today when his FJR suddenly died on I-80, he can be forgiven for thinking the worst thoughts about FJR ECM's. A quick check found the culprit. His hydration system hose had been flopping around and hit the kill switch. Hopefully, that is the last time Paul gets hosed in the rally.

Chris Purney said his experience so far in the rally could be summed up as "these boots were made for walking".

Mike Riley thanked Lisa for the all-inclusive bike wash, but said next time just a bucket and sponge would be sufficient. No need for an all-day downpour.

It is not often the scribe has an opportunity to post a photo of RallyMaster Lisa Landry in a daily report outside of the start/finish and checkpoint reports, on a riding day like today. But thanks to quick thinking by IBR Vet Paul Tong, we have photo evidence of Mrs. Landry being carded while trying to check out of Target with a bottle of wine to sooth her nerves after all the stress of the non-call-in calls today. Not sure if the big smile is in anticipation of the wine, or for being carded. And no, your scribe does not plan to be in striking distance when she reads this report.



Photos by John Harrison, unless otherwise noted.

John Harrison

IBR Scribe

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