

2009 Iron Butt Rally, Day 11  
Thursday, September 3, 2009

A lot of motorcyclists have already started showing up at the Red Lion in Spokane, Washington, for the finish of the 2009 Iron Butt Rally tomorrow morning. The hotel staff has been warned that many of the finishers will be road weary when they arrive and may appear somewhat grungy. Today, one of the hotel staff made the comment that the arriving riders “don’t look that bad.” Of course, it’s just spectators and IBR staff that are arriving today.

**Looking Way Better Than “Not That Bad,”  
Scorer Lisa Stevens Arrives at the Red Lion in Spokane**



**Down to the Wire**

Jim Owen and Jeff Earls have apparently both scored the 22,810 point trifecta consisting of Gay, Michigan, Manitowish Waters, Wisconsin, and Thunder Bay, Ontario. With just one day left to go before the finish in Spokane, Jim and Jeff arrived in Winnipeg, Manitoba at the same time this morning. Owen, one of the riders who actually read the rules, called in to raise a concern about the following rule provision:

*Any riders reaching the same bonus locations at approximately the same time during a 24-hour period will be presumed to be team members unless the rallymaster determines otherwise.*

Jim's concern was that there is only one optimum route from Winnipeg to the finish and he assumes that both he and Jeff will be hitting exactly the same bonus locations at almost exactly the same time all the way to the finish. Jim said this was likely to happen "...probably because we are both on the winning route; <laughter> we *hope* we are on the winning route."

It's really not an issue. If one of them breaks down, they won't be hitting the same bonuses at the same time for 24 hours. If neither of them breaks down, even being declared a team will have no effect on their ultimate point totals.

### Behind Schedule

After Scoring Thunder Bay yesterday, Greg Marbach overslept last night and found himself about 1,400 miles from the finish at 9:21 a.m. Pacific Time this morning. Riding 1,400 miles in 21 ½ hours is usually nothing for Greg, but he's not in Nevada today. He was in some town I've never heard of in the province of Ontario, and he has bonus stops he needs to make along the way back.

Alan Barbic is also going to be cutting it close. At 6 a.m. this morning he was in the bustling metropolis of Watersmeet, Michigan, which is 1,633 miles from the finish and nowhere close to an Interstate. A Bun Burner Gold pace all the way in is required to put him in the middle of the penalty window.

### More Mechanical Problems

Gary Jarl's R1200RT is leaking final drive lubricant. It's a prelude to catastrophic failure, but he is going to attempt to make it to the finish.

Matt Watkins called from Minnesota to report that he has blown a rear shock. His plan is to limp back to the finish realizing that the possibility of maintaining a top ten slot is gone.

Bob Mutchler has had major problems with his side car rig. Based on Bob's call today, the sidecar actually became separated from the bike. He is back on the road, but unlikely to have enough points to finish.

Ken Meese switched from a rock hard Metzeler ME 880 rear tire to a stickier Avon Storm to run the last leg. After running the new tire down to the wear bars in 2 days, he was fortunate to line up a replacement tire yesterday without losing much time. But now he has had to spend about four hours dealing with repairs to his shift lever, which fell off of his K1200GT. Glen Pancoast took four hours out of his riding time to help get Ken back on the road. (No, he won't get an extra four hours to finish.)

Alex Harper is stopping frequently to add oil to his third bike in this rally, a BMW GS. The bike has a serious oil leak that is soaking Alex's left leg.

## Other Problems

Tom and Rosie Sperry made their call-in bonus today from the side of the road while on their way to Saskatoon. It seemed like a good time to make the call because they weren't going anywhere soon, having just run out of gas.

Richard Buber hit a small deer in Minnesota, but there was relatively little damage to either Richard or the bike. Some belly pan plastic is broken on the R1150RT. Both Richard and the RT are covered in deer excrement. The scorers are drawing straws tonight to see who gets to score him tomorrow morning. The honor goes to the short straw, of course. (However, deer excrement will probably smell better than some of the riders.)

## Back In the Rally

At this point in the Rally, the number of DNFs is usually increasing rapidly. Yesterday, the number of riders actually increased. Margaret Peart was able to get her R1200GS repaired in time to possibly finish. She called in this morning on her way to the Crazy Horse Mountain bonus.

## Two More Riders Are Out Today

Kent Kidwell ran his R1200RT off the road this morning in Alberta, Canada. According to the RCMP and his wife, he is not seriously injured but he won't be a finisher.

This afternoon, John Stanforth had an accident while riding his Gold Wing to Gerlach, Nevada. He may have broken a couple of ribs and a collar bone, but he actually sounded pretty good when he left a voice mail using the call-in bonus number after the accident.

## Call-In Bonus Performance Suffers On the Last Day

Vance Keeney, Gerhard Memmen-Krueger, Rick Neeley, Brian Roberts, John Stanforth, Bob Collins, and Andy Mills failed to call in before noon today. Mills called, but was 2 minutes late. Bob Collins was 82 minutes late. John Stanforth was more than three hours late when he called in for the first time just before having his accident on the way to Gerlach.

## Tomorrow

Scoring will begin tomorrow morning at 4:00 a.m. We are not expecting top finishers to arrive until shortly before the opening of the penalty window at 7:00 a.m. Scoring is likely to continue until almost noon since some riders are likely to be well into the penalty window. The entire afternoon will be devoted to auditing the documentation for the top riders and interviewing the top ten finishers. I hope to be ready to post the final standings the instant the winner is announced at the banquet tomorrow night.

Tom Austin

Copyright © 2009, Iron Butt Rally, Inc., Chicago, IL