

2009 Iron Butt Rally, Day 6
Saturday, August 29, 2009

The Rallymaster's Minivan Strikes Gold

After staying up all night Wednesday dealing with rider check-in and scoring, the IBR staff caravan only made it to Omaha, Nebraska, on Thursday night. However, Steve Hobart, Colin Tanji, and Lisa Landry left the rest of us in the dust yesterday. Their grossly overloaded Kia Minivan made the 1,550 miles from Omaha to Checkpoint 2 in Santa Ana, California in 24-hours. On two wheels, this would have been a "Bun Burner Gold," one of the Iron Butt Association's "Extreme" rides.

Lisa must have really been cracking the whip the entire trip. During previous days on the road, she reported that Steve and Colin wanted to stop to eat about every 15 minutes.

Although Sunday will be another long night for the staff, things will ease up a bit during Leg 3. It's the longest leg of the rally (99 hours), but it's only 1,241 miles from Checkpoint 2 to the finish in Spokane, Washington. We will even have time to do some laundry.

The Shane Smith Bonus

A total of 43 riders made it to the 4,145 point bonus at the home of 2005 Iron Butt Rally winner Shane Smith. During the 12-hour window that ran from 5 p.m. on Friday evening until 5 a.m. on Saturday morning, Shane and his family provided the riders with showers, food, and a chance to take a nap.

Eric Jewell was the first to show up; Alan Barbic and Davo Jones were the last, with only minutes to spare. Shane reports that there was a clear correlation between how well the riders looked and when they arrived; the earlier they arrived, the better they looked. Alan and Davo apparently looked like road kill.

Tales from the Road

The Rallymaster reports that "Turbo" Dave Hicks is ahead of John Langan in the category of the lamest request for a favorable rules interpretation. Headed for a bonus down a dirt road, Turbo called to ask if would be okay just to take a photo of the beginning of the dirt road rather than ride to the bonus because he is riding an FJR1300, not a dual-sport. Questions like this are what the IBR staff lives for. What makes Hicks' request for relief especially lame is that we have pictures of him on the same bike in the middle of the Black Rock Desert.

Ken Meese must be one of the luckiest riders out there. As he was coasting to a stop the other day, having just run out of fuel, Jerry White happened onto the scene. Jerry took the time to fetch Ken an aluminum bottle of gasoline from the closest gasoline station. The station was only a few miles away, but it would have been a damn long walk for Mr. Meese.

Joel Rappoport had his bacon saved by AAA. When the footpeg/sidestand assembly broke off of his R60/6, AAA was able to dispatch a truck with a welder to get Joel back on the road.

The Inevitable Has Finally Happened

It's a surprise only because we had to wait this long; the first BMW final drive failure has stranded Dave Biasotti in Colorado. Dave's R1150RT is parked in a puddle of final drive lubricant. It's another in a long line of "isolated" incidents that BMW of North America has never acknowledged to be a problem. Dave is probably out of the rally unless he can get a new final drive installed by the end of the day. Fortunately, a nearby dealer had a final drive in stock, unlike the closest dealer to Checkpoint 2, who doesn't stock spare final drives because "they never fail."

Another Rider is Out

Canadian John Ferber called the Rallymaster this morning to say that he is withdrawing from the rally. He has been suffering from heat exhaustion and a good night's sleep didn't help.

The rate of attrition is likely to increase on Leg 3 as riders and their machines succumb to more than a week of hard miles.

Bill Rauschenberg Update

Bill Rauschenberg sustained multiple injuries during his previously reported crash, including serious bruising and a few fractures. However, the report from the Medical Center in Bismarck, ND is that he is stable and moving in the right direction.

Tomorrow

Riders will be arriving at Checkpoint 2 tomorrow to take the 2009 Iron Butt Rally I.Q. test. The highest scores on that test will go to the riders who show up well before the opening of the checkpoint window in order to maximize the rest they will be getting before the bonus listings are handed out at 4 a.m. on Monday morning. Leg 3 is not only the longest leg of the Rally, it has the highest points available per hour. Riders hoping for a top ten finish will need a clear head to prepare the optimum route plan.

Tom Austin

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