

Day 2 – IBR TV

Keyboard riders following the SpotWalla public page hit ‘refresh’ every few minutes the entire night on Monday, each time trying to track blips from point to point. So did Rally Staff. We will again tonight. And tomorrow. And the night after that. The now universal use of satellite spot tracking devices has greatly expanded the safety *and* the audience appeal of long distance riding events. “I can’t stop watching” was a common comment posted on many online forums. The random rider number generation with each update on the public page helps preserve the rider’s privacy as well as ensure competitive information isn’t advertently disclosed. As some have noticed, not all riders have consented to the public following. Likewise, riders were not required to grant access to the Rally Staff or even use such a system. However, the point value of doing so is such that to not use one would all but exclude a high placing finish. As scribe for this year’s event, I both love and hate the damn little thing.

Like others, I can’t stop watching. It’s addictively hypnotic. I’m not sleeping. My meals are taken in front of the keyboard. There’s no wireless service in the men’s room here at the hotel. There is absolutely no reason I should know that. It’s become *The Truman Show* and, frankly, it’s not healthy. But I do it for you...and Mike Kneebone...and to piss off Bob Higdon. He’s sitting right there across the table, furiously searching SpotWalla for excessive speed violators, vein bulging in his forehead. I know he just wants me to slump over in my chair. I can feel it.

It’s been an eerily quiet Day 2. Lisa Landry’s phone has not been ringing as much as anticipated. That will change as the days wear on. But, for now, it’s a rare treat allowing staff to double and triple check preparations for the Checkpoint in 48 hours. Our day has been good. For some riders, it has not.

Drew Dill’s mechanical problems didn’t end with the motor work on the ride to the Start. After collecting seven bonuses from New Mexico into Arizona, the clutch on Big Blue Beast let go Monday night. He was back on the road Tuesday with a new clutch and with routing adjustments. He may have stumbled out of the gate, but he can bounce back. He has to. Any rider with the class to thank the Rallymaster for putting together a “rally of a lifetime for all of us” while standing on the sidelines on Day One awaiting repairs, has to finish.



No news about the Hopeless Class is good news. Kurt Worden and his Ninja 250 seem to be collecting a good number of smaller and midsized bonuses without having to knock out huge miles or deal with high heat. Jack Cheasty, who was struggling with routing data on Monday,

has been similarly consistent to Kurt, but further west and in higher heat. Perhaps he is taking the Paris-Dakar moniker for his air-cooled BMW a bit too literally? But, for another day, these guys are staying off my radar.

Responsible deer parents drill their fawns often on predators in the wild. They use flashcards of



wolves, mountain lions, hunters, Disney illustrators, Peterbilt's and so on. They should add Triumph's Trophy to the list after Troy Martin hit one just south of Hoback, Wyoming, late last night. Troy was unharmed and his Trophy will continue. Bambi is dead and Lisa is not happy no venison will be at the scoring table. Troy also reported having crashed earlier in the day on a dirt road near Ft. Defiance, Arizona. Seriously? Hopefully, Dale will now lift his curse from Troy's tech inspection faux pas.

Josh Mountain knocked out a monster ride Monday into Big Bend National Park in southwest Texas near the Rio Grande. At the end of Monday, it looked as if he would be close to the end of daylight limit for that bonus. The checkpoint scoring team is already preparing to scrutinize his photo for evidence daylight. Or if it was merely Josh's big smile at the Big Ride he has planned. It will be a critical issue for Josh, the make or break of his entire leg that could have him in the lead Thursday night. By late in the day Tuesday, he had swept his way up the High Plains and seemed pointed towards Little Bighorn Battlefield National Monument in southeastern Montana. It is an ambitious plan indeed and, of course, no ambitious plan has ever gone wrong at Little Bighorn. *Ever.*

Phil Weston's big bet to bag the Big Bend bonus before bouncing north went bust when he failed to make the Daylight Only bonus in daylight. He had been shadowing Josh all day Monday, but just couldn't get it in the hole. It's a good thing the 2013 14th place finisher had all night in Alpine, Texas, waiting for the sun to rise. Based on his assault deep into the heart of Texas today, Phil seems to have come to peace with his overbite and made good use of his downtime. Assuming he took his rest bonus last night as well, he may be sipping lemonade tonight from Monday's lemons, near the top of the points tally and far more rested than Josh.

Will Barclay spent Monday in the plush comfy saddle of his H-D heading northeast. With so few bonuses along his route, some had speculated he was headed home to New York for a few more Motor Company T-shirts. Based on his track through Monday night, he should have collected 997 points, riding nearly 800 miles. By comparison, Josh Mountain should have

earned as many points within the first three hours Monday. Barclay swept up a number of bonuses in the Kansas City area Tuesday morning, checking off more parks and states, before continuing north into Nebraska, Wisconsin and finally turning west across South Dakota. His routing strategy remains unclear. He could be knocking down states and saving big point hunting for later legs when the states are, you know, closer. Jim Owen appears to be riding yet another *very* efficient route, concentrated so far in just three states adjoining New Mexico. At no time has he been more than 400 miles from the checkpoint, yet is on track to be in the top five in points. Bob Lilley is riding a similar route, although not as tight as Owen. But Lilley is moving north tonight which gives him some more options Wednesday. Craig Brooks is casting a wider net than either Owen or Lilley and should find himself with Josh Mountain cashing a big points check in Little Bighorn by nightfall, maybe Greg Rice, too. Eric Jewell has already been there. Kirsten Talken-Spaulling may have marked the territory as well. Leading the pack at this very early stage of the first leg appears to be Chris Sakala, having gone to the Sun and back in Glacier National Park and is now pointed south. Wednesday is shaping up to be a very interesting day in the kennel.

Rookie Danny D-O-S-S-M-A-N appears to be having a perfectly lovely ride, scenic in fact. He's not letting the indignity of my rookie mistake of misspelling his name as Dawson yesterday seemingly bother him at all. Then again, he really wasn't enthralled about winning the Hair Dye contest either, once he started to feel the pressure of being the First rider out of the lot Sunday. But, he didn't want to offend Dale. Let's hope his congeniality continues through scoring.

Proving that you don't have to be young to be foolish, Al Holtsberry and Nahum Sloan, at 79 and 71, respectively, both found their way into Death Valley, California, arriving at the Furnace Creek Visitor Center around 116 degrees. Being the experienced elder, Al is smartly wearing his white riding suit from 1986. He should have been cooler. (And, before anyone freaks out looking for penalty points for changing bikes, please note that Al is also riding a Yamaha FJR, not a BMW R1200GS as initially reported.) After retreating from the hottest temps today in the US, Sloan turned north in Nevada towards Reno. Holtsberry turned south and looks to be bedding down in Las Vegas. Maybe these old guys know a thing or two about replenishing liquids.

Rookie (Walter) Jim Orr is very organized. He has two of everything, including Spot trackers. Of course, he left one in Albuquerque that continues to send signals confusing the hell out of everyone. Prior to arriving, he shipped parts for his TPMS to the rally hotel to install before tech inspection. Jim is running a car tire on his 2007 Gold Wing and IBR rules require a tire pressure monitoring system when so equipped. In an absolute freak coincidence even Bob Higdon could not fabricate, the hotel released the package to *another* Walter Orr who happened to be checking out. The hotel staff helped connect Walter Orr(1) with Walter Orr(2) with the former shipping the parts to the latter in time for tech on Sunday. If history is any indicator, Walter Orr(1) won't be the only civilian enlisted before to help a rider before the finish and Iron Butt Rally.

Heard around Rally Central:

10:32 AM.

(rookie) Hammy Tan: "Lisa, the bridge over Snake River is closed. Can I take a picture of the Bridge Out sign to get credit for the bonus?"

Lisa: "The bridge over the Snake River is closed?"

Hammy: "Yes?"

Lisa: "The *only* bridge over Snake River in Idaho is closed?"

Hammy: *(silence)*

Lisa: "Hammy, is your Street Pilot set for dirt roads?"

Hammy: "Oh... *(pause)* Never mind."

Section III(B)(3) subparagraph (4) of Iron Butt Rally rules allows for riders to collect points for the bonus if the *only* access road is unexpectedly closed and provided multiple paved roads don't exist. In some cases, the detour to the next paved road can be hundreds of miles (so sad). In Hammy's case, however, the great Owsley Bridge Eastside Turnout closure detour was 3.23 miles.



Lisa: "Chris, are you checking your facts before you publish?"

Chris: "Yes, Lisa. I upload and 2,000 LDriders immediately let me know what was wrong."

Lisa: "As long as you have a system."

"I swear to God. If Cimino makes one more rookie mistake, I'll beat him to death with my feeble bare hands and take over the keyboard."

That's a full lid for today. Tonight I will be listening to call-in bonus recordings and laughing until I pee. And, hitting 'refresh' on SpotWalla.

Chris Cimino
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Iron Butt Rally©