

Thursday June 20 Day 4 Tick Tock

The “lovely” airport issues which threatened to waylay half of the IBR staff were resolved, but not without some drama...or trauma, depending on who’s description is to be believed. We will not dwell on those details. Suffice it to say the gang’s all here, except for a few who are riding through the same weather issues plaguing the competitors on the way to Checkpoint 1.

IBR Veteran and staff volunteer Tim Masterson contacted your scribe this morning with a story from the road last night. Seems Tim stopped at a Pilot truck stop near Mountain Home, Idaho. While there he saw Bucky Dent, who was finishing his rest bonus. There was a soccer tournament in the area and all the hotels were fully booked. Bucky apparently slept in a shower stall at the truck stop. Not the traditional “Iron Butt Motel”. However, when one considers the choice, there could be efficiency advantages. Given that the outside temperature in the area dipped into the low 40’s (F), the shower stall would be much warmer than a park bench. If ‘close to the bathroom’ is good, could actually ‘in the bathroom’ be better? And of course, there would be minimal wasted time getting that morning wake up shower. Brilliant

We have had several requests for more descriptions of the bonus locations the riders are visiting. We do our best to include some of those descriptions in the reports when appropriate. However, the riders have enough to manage without well-meaning fans descending on bonus locations.

Followers of IBR lore may recall the Dollywood debacle during Leg 2 the 1999 rally. A more recent issue, tied to the public following rider’s Spotwalla tracks, involved another well-meaning fan who crashed his motorcycle while trying to ride alongside a rally rider and wave. Rally staff encourages spectating at the checkpoints, but the potential for things to go wrong if the public knows where riders may be going prevents us from publishing any specific bonuses until they are no longer in play.

Spotwalla has a time delay for the same reason. Yes, we know there are some smart fans who can interpolate data and get a good idea of where a rider may be going. We just hope those fans are also smart enough to not interfere with a rider who should be focused on the task at hand.

Marty Cover reports experiencing a tip-over. He is OK, but the bike suffered a broken foot peg. Jim Burriss was there to assist with picking up the bike. Such things are easily remedied with the temporary application of vice grips and duct tape. However, if those are not available, or the passenger peg will not fit in place of the missing rider peg, or if there are no highway pegs; the lack of solid footing becomes an issue. Fortunately for Marty, he was able to adapt one of the passenger pegs to fit.

Some of us old timers recall first generation Kawasaki Concours riders carrying spare foot pegs and mounting plates due to the maddening tendency for them to break in otherwise minor tip-overs.

Kurt Worden called the Rallymaster with news from Beartooth Pass. He was caught in the ice and snow and dropped the little Kawasaki 300 Versys several times, like maybe 10 times. The Versys is “banged up” and some of Kurt’s riding gear is damaged, he’s got a bit of road rash but he is OK. He managed to get to Silver Gate, Montana for the night. A local couple took him in, fed him, and provided a warm place to sleep. He arrived at the checkpoint fairly beat up but he did not quit. It’s just not in him.

Roy Kjendal was also climbing up Beartooth Pass when a snowstorm struck. He tried to push on through the deteriorating conditions but slid down on black ice and fell into a snowbank. He somehow managed to get the 2016 BMW K1600GTL upright, but he could not stand on the ice and fell again.

He activated the red flag on his tracker and another rider contacted Lisa. She contacted both Montana Sheriffs and Wyoming HP. Although he was close to the Montana border, he was in the Wyoming jurisdiction, which meant instead of a few minutes for assistance to arrive from the north, it would be a couple of hours for assistance to arrive from the south.

While waiting in the cold and wind, he managed to get some assistance and get the bike back down toward the Montana side of the pass, but when he arrived at the snow gate, it had been closed, locking him on the closed side of the highway. He told Lisa there was no way around the gate. When Lisa asked the sheriff to get the gate opened, the sheriff told Lisa to have Roy just ride around the gate on the path. Roy said it was not possible.

In the meantime, help from the south was a long way away, as it was all-hands-on deck to try and get the DOT snowplow unstuck near the top of the pass. At last report, the Montana DOT was contacting a local rancher who had a key to the gate across Highway 212 to get to the gate and allow Roy back into civilization. Once they spring him from captivity, he will need to get north to I-90 and make haste to Kennewick. No quitting here.

Don Stadtler got his HD Softtail stator replaced in just over an hour, just as Lisa said could happen. He was back on the road and leaving Salt Lake City in his rearview mirrors this morning, still in the rally. How much better would it have been if he could have gotten it repaired yesterday?

Late update:

All riders who have not withdrawn from the rally arrived safely at the checkpoint. Quite a few were very early. Several arrived in the penalty points, but no one was past 10:00 p.m., so no DNFs due to arrival time. Food was good and plentiful, comfortable beds awaited and all was well.

Some great stories from the checkpoint and a LOT more info tomorrow, stay tuned.

John Harrison
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