



Steve Richards and Gary Reid claimed first Calculator with 31 points.

Earl's was impressive as well...

After a late night enjoying the Kelowna nightlife, or laying under a car in the warm parking garage, a brief check of the scores and everyone converged on a common route out of town. Running south and west overlooking Okanagan Lake, then up into the residential areas, climbing out of Peachland and twisting into the woods. Deeper snow greeted the teams for Trout Creek Loop regularity on Peachland FSR, into the big hairpin at 50 km/h, then climbing again, hard right, top of the hill, speeds increased to 65, then 72 — still plenty of snow. Bear Left onto Trout Creek FSR at Headwaters Lake (anybody see the lake?). Just past the fourth checkpoint, speeds dropped to 65 km/h, then two bridges for hard points, and two more checkpoints. At 39 km from Peachland, the route turned back toward Summerland — 60, 65 and 68 km/h. Five more controls along the Kettle Valley Railway and Trans Canada Trail. Bridge, hairpin, hairpin, sharp climb, run along the ridge above the creek, hairpin, checkpoint and pavement — nearly 75 kms, longest of the rally, with 11 controls.

Summerland transit dropped down the hill (still twisty) into town and north on Highway 97 along the lake to Peachland and a repeat of Trout Loop. Rallymaster Westwick questioned whether “scores will be better because they've seen the roads, or worse because the snow has been

thoroughly polished.” Result for at least the first 15 cars was “better.” At 37 km, end of section.

Osprey Lakes transit spanned the 47 km to Princeton for a welcomed break.

Northwest from Princeton, Otter Valley regularity followed the Tulameen River, below the rock formations called “hoodoos” and dodging rocks on the road, passing historic Coalmont (Canadian Pacific Railway's “mountain of coal”), with its three-story Coalmont Hotel, then into Tulameen and the Otter Valley Road — still 7 km to gravel. An easy 18 km to the hairpin, then smooth road past five checkpoints and a big medium right into long medium left. A long right with some ice in the shade led to a long sweeping left (dry this year) before ending at Highway 5A after 70 km.

Just up the road to Bates, and the start for 17-km Kentucky-Alleyne regularity, shortest of the rally. The first checkpoint, at cattleguard, has had numerous “close encounters of the moose kind” over the years. Following a quick climb through an easy left-right-left, 5 km into the regularity the rally drops to 18 km/h through the campground — Kentucky Lake on the right, Alleyne Lake on the left. Two more checkpoints, then under 97C and 2 km to the end of section.

A 42-km transit led to Boston Pizza in Merritt to round out 808.40 km (502.29 miles) in 18-1/2 hours, with a total of 54 scored controls.

Scores took a bit of time as most of the logsheets arrived after the rally cars.

Presentations for the 2008 Pacific Coast Challenge were held by R. Dale Kraushaar. Top honors again went to Steve Perret and Kathryn Hansen with two firsts, a second and a third in the four-rally series.

Thunderbird 2009 saw several past winners: Tom Burgess from 1963, '68 and '71; Bill Fane, also from 1963; Jim Bowie from 1968 and 71; Taisto Heinonen from 1972; Gary Reid from 1987 and '91; Steve Richards from 1991; Peter Hill from 1993, '98, '99 and 2006; from 1994, 96, 97, and 2007 — Satch Carlson; also from 1994 and 2007 — Russ Kraushaar; Gary Webb from 1996 and 2001; Mark Nolte (checkpoint crew) from 2000; John Kisela from 2001; Glenn Wallace from 2005 and 2005; Geoff Hill from 2006; and Jason Webster and Brandon Harer from 2008. The field covered 10 Historic, 12 Unlimited, eight Calculator, three Paper and 14 Novice teams, with 42 finishers.

Congratulations to Satch Carlson and Russ Kraushaar in the Historic 1969 Saab Sonett II V4, with 6 points. First Unlimited to Jeff McMillen and Marvin Crippen with 8. First Calculator to Steve Richards and Gary Reid with 31. First Paper to Steve Perret and Kathryn Hansen with 165. And First Novice to Clarke Bayles and Maralyn Hope with 117.

See complete results and more photos at www.rallybc.com.