

Oregon 1000 Rally *Great roads, but bad luck*

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Contributing Editor

TIGARD, Ore. — The Oregon Rally Group and Oregon Region SCCA presented the 2009 Oregon 1000 Rally Aug. 1 and 2. Organizers Kevin Poirier, Chris Hale, Mark Tabor (with able helper, daughter Madelyn) and Lawana “The Queen of Little Details” Poirier put together a great two-day tour into Central Oregon. O1K was also Round Two of the Pacific Coast Challenge rally series.

Start ceremonies at the Tigard Courtyard Marriott led to an easy tire warm-up and odo-calc to Bald Peak State Park, on paved and gravel surfaces.

Out of the park, on the Jamaican Bobsledding TSD, the first turn was onto gravel, down Kings Grade, shared with a doe and fawn, seemingly undaunted by the rally cars. After checkpoint one, the route continued south, passing nut orchards, berry fields and vineyards. A missing instruction sent teams searching to find the route. Organizers quickly posted an emergency instruction placard denoting the turn. Climbing into the Eola Hills now, first on pavement, then a narrow bit of gravel, to a checkpoint-turned-route control with instructions to regroup in Dallas (yes, there is one in Oregon).

The run-work format gives each team a chance to get out of the car for a few minutes to take their turn at checkpointing. All of the 17 cars had an opportunity to stretch during the day.

As we headed south from Dallas, we passed Fir Grove, Pedee, the Ritner Creek Covered Bridge, Kings Valley, Hoskins and over Summit Road into Mary’s River Valley. All paved now, the transit skirted Corvallis, to a break at Thompson’s Mill Historical site along the Calapooia River. Crossing I-5, through fields of grain and hay, then into the oak forest and climbing the gravel over Middle Ridge, then paved Mountain Home, before the Sweet Home Transit and lunch break, at Sunnyside

County Park, or at “any available shade” along the 23-mile free zone.

FSR 11 took us up for about 40 miles, then dropped through pavement hairpins for 7 miles to Highway 22 south. Highway 20 crossed Santiam Pass into Eastern Oregon through some spectacular volcanic geology, between Mount Jefferson and Mount Washington, then past Suttle Lake and Black Butte. A radio call alerted us to a roadside repair in progress. Jason Webster and Brandon Harer, in Car 8, had fried the alternator. Steve Perret and Kathryn Hansen, in Car 12, dipped into their spares bin and pulled out the needed part. Gotta love those Alcan 5000 types! With a 16-minute repair, Car 8 took a Time Allowance; Car 12 had time to spare.

The streets in Sisters were damp. Just out of town the rains came! The Terrabone TSD and Going Shumway Transit brought some of the heaviest rain I’ve seen — Midwest torrential, all accompanied by spectacular lightning strikes where even if you are looking away, you have time to turn and still see it! Huge vertical bolts, interspersed with horizontal air strikes.

The Last Dam TSD took us through horse country and the OHV area called Alfalfa Curves, on the way to Reservoir Road and a drop down to Prineville Dam and the twisty Crooked River Highway to the final checkpoint of the day. The day ended with the banquet in Prineville, after 575 kilometers with 15 scored controls.

Saturday scores were very tight. First overall (Equipped): Russ and Katy Kraushaar with 12, followed by April Smith and Marcus Song with 13, then 16, 18 and at 23 the first Limited car of Larry Lefebvre and Marinus Damm.

Sunday saw the route enter the Ochoco Mountains on FSR 33 and pass Stein’s Pillar, a rock spire stretching over 350 feet above its base. Exposure — Central Oregon Style TSD saw five checkpoints before heading north toward Madras.

Gateway to Nowhere TSD was our run-work for the day and we saw cars accelerating into earlies, and cars blocked by locals taking late points. Hay Creek Transit took the rally out to Highway 97 for a brief run before turning off for more hillclimbs and gravel, through historic Ashwood and over the hills, passing the Dickson Century Farm, all the while watching the ever-increasing smoke from a lightning-sparked wildfire, just beyond the ridge to our east. No time to visit Rajneeshpuram, we headed into Antelope for lunches and Shaniko for ice cream.

The Brain Freeze TSD followed section lines, caught a tight hairpin, then onto pavement for a twisting drop to the Deschutes River at Sherrars Bridge, with views of the still-used native fishing structures. White River Falls State Park to Tygh Valley ended our rally with a cracked radiator — our bad luck! We wished friends good luck and called AAA. The route continued on Looking for a Friend TSD, turning west on Forest Road 44, into the mountains. Dropping into Hood River County, north briefly on Highway 35, then Cooper Spur for the Bonus Points TSD into Hood River. Did everyone zero CP38, with mileage and time noted in the routebook? No, only three, and only six 1s...

Finish ceremonies and the buffet at Stonehenge Gardens, after 1004.27 kilometers, saw Russ and Katy Kraushaar holding onto first overall with 24, April Smith and Marcus Song following closely in second with 25. Jason Webster and Brandon Harer took third with 28. First in Limited and fifth overall went to Larry Lefebvre and Marinus Damm with 52. Second in Limited and tied for seventh overall were Steve Richards and Gary Reid at 89. First SOP, SCCA Stock, went to Hal Dittman and Susan Everett with 466.

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