

Route Planning 400

Hopefully I have given you some great basics about getting information from your rallymaster into your instruments and making some decisions on setting a direction. That is absolutely great but not always so useful. Those darned rallymasters are a crafty lot and they read also (sure they do....), so they know we are all out there with our computers and GPS's just waiting to crack the key to their rally they just spent hundreds of hours preparing. Because of that they are masters of coming up with ways to make the classic computer analysis useless.

You have to remember that what we are doing is trying to have some fun, challenge ourselves, see some unique sites and do some unique things with friends we have and new friends we will make. What I am trying to do in this lesson is give you a more flexible and wider framework to work from so that you will not do what I did when I got my first rallybook – I froze stiff as a board, and just started worrying about where my first gas stop would be (hey I rode a bike that go about 170 miles before it seriously needed gas).

Self Assessment

This is probably the biggest single important thing you will do for your rally. In this exercise you will evaluate what you want to accomplish, set targets for miles and overall goals for your rally performance.

Rallying is not certificate riding. You have new tasks to perform in collecting bonuses, finding unknown locations and/or performing tasks. You do not get to chose the roads you will ride, you will be put in situations that you would normally not chose (such as in heavy National Park or City traffic) you will ride into weather you would rather avoid and get lost and have to ask directions. These are things that will impact your ability to pack on miles. I like to think of setting my goals in categories

- 1) Mileage (How many miles do I think I can do).
- 2) Points and Bonuses (base route, alternate route, trying to win, trying to survive).
- 3) Performance at rally tasks (staying on route, sticking to plan, earning all points claimed, claiming all points earned, having fun, being a good rallyist in the eyes of the RM).

If you have only completed a single or a couple of SS1K's you might want to set your goals relatively low:

1. Complete the rally minimum mileage or near to 1,000 miles as possible with rest.
2. Complete the minimum number of bonuses required to be a finisher.
3. Do not lose any points in scoring or performing basic rally tasks.
4. Have a good time – be the rallyist the rallymaster will want back.

I remember my first rally very clearly. I could not always go 24 hours straight without getting a nap and this was a 26 hour rally. I had mastered the ability to ride 1,000 miles efficiently (able to do it in about 16 hours given appropriate roads) and had come close to completing a BBG. When the rallypack opened

I saw an alternate route on very fast freeway roads that would set me up for a BBG and best of all I had built in witnesses with the ODO check. I set my goals:

1. Complete my first BBG
2. Secure the four bonuses that defined the route.
3. Be efficient enough to leave some nap time if necessary.
4. Have fun.

I did not know about losing points at the scoring table, I did not understand the time constraints of some bonuses, so I did not set any such goals. I finished my first BBG, had time for a short power nap that was needed, but missed a timed bonus so got "0" points and finished in official last place. I also accepted the loss of all my points graciously and had a good laugh with the Rallymaster and we have been friends since.

Lets look at that mileage target in some detail. This is the most important target that you will set. It needs to be practical, within your capabilities and set so you will be challenged but that you will finish safely. Setting this requires some knowledge of what is difficult and what are basic accomplishments in endurance rallying. I am going to give you some basic guidelines:

1. 42.5 mph average will result in completing 1,000 miles in 24 hours.
2. 62.5 mph average will result in completing 1,500 miles in 24 hours .
3. 75 mph average will result in 1,800 miles in 24 hours.

If you can complete 1,000 miles on demand, just in the act of touring – then you should be able to use target #1. If you are involved in a multiday rally with difficult roads or weather and you have easily completed back to back 1,000 mile days then this may be a good target.

Target #2 is appropriate for a short rally where you will not need rest, possibly a 24 hour rally on open roads with 70 mph speed limits. It is very difficult to do this more than one day at a time or on secondary roads. It is a very experienced rallyist that can complete back to back BBG's even on open roads with minimal bonuses and fewer people than I can count on my fingers have ever done three in a row. Just doing it in a single day takes most of 24 hours at a fast pace and that means no time for rest. With these constraints it is almost impossible to maintain a 62.5 mph average over multidays.

Target #3 is for the experienced rider on open roads with high speed limits – and for a 24 hour rally it is about the max to be expected. Yes, there are "rumors" of the illusive 2K day. I am here to tell you to forgettaboutit.

Tool Chest of Accomplishments - Another part of this calculation is what you have accomplished to date. I do not try to set personal bests on mileage during rally's unless I am presented with a special opportunity to do so (as I was in my first rally). I am fully aware of my capabilities and accomplishments. I know I can do a SS1K on most any day, I can usually pull off a BBG when requested, but I have not completed two BBG's in a row. I have run 1,000 – 1,200 miles a day on relatively difficult roads for several days at a time. Finally I know that I can run up to around 1,700 miles in 24 hours given favorable

conditions. These are demonstrated accomplishments and limitations. It is my tool chest of things I know I can pull out if necessary. You should have this and be realistic about it.

Conditioning – as a last consideration, and really a moderating influence on my Tool Chest I have to consider my current condition. Have I been getting good rest, is my overall conditioning the same or similar to when I set my standards, do I have nagging problems that will be amplified during a long ride (sore wrist, blister, etc).

Rest Requirements - I have developed knowledge of my needs for rest (normal is about 6 hours a night). I have divined after many very long (7 to 15 day) rides that I can go several days with 4 hours of good sleep nightly but will need 6 – 8 every three days or so to catch back up (Later I will provide a link to a fatigue study done by our own Don Arthur that is required knowledge for all rallyists). I also know I can at times ride 36 hours without normally having to stop if very well rested (but will need a solid 8 hours after that to recover acceptably).

With this knowledge (what are difficult and reasonable targets, what is in my Tool Chest of accomplishments, my conditioning, and what my necessary rest requirements are) combined with the difficulty of the general rally route, I can establish a reasonable target for mileage. A realistic target for me will normally be somewhere between 45 and 62 mph average, depending upon the length of the rally and the difficulty of the route. The longer the rally the lower the average mph.

Never be Afraid to DNF

I have DNF'd (Did Not Finish) my share of rallies. There is no shame in this and normally it is because I set my sights to high. As my father would say, my eyes were bigger than my stomach. Or maybe something happened, broken motorcycle, misread instructions, caught in traffic, or simply I needed more rest than I made allotment for. I have heard people postulate that if “you do not DNF then you are not trying hard enough”. I prefer to think that if you never DNF then maybe you are doing things you might not want to talk about.

Think about that when you are rallying. If you are tempted to do something you would not be proud to tell your Rallymaster, then maybe you are getting a bit over the line. Stopping and getting a hotel room might be the very smartest thing you could do, waiting for that pilot car and not running a construction zone is probably the smart thing to do, waiting in line to get a receipt rather than cutting in front of a group of civilians is probably the right thing to do.

I told you about getting Zero points on my first rally. I needed a gas receipt before 1:00am that day in Durango, CO. I had gotten my gas but the pump did not put out a receipt. Once entering the store there was a lineup at the register and I patiently waited my turn and when I got my receipt it was three minutes late. I commented to the attendant what had just happened to me and another person offered me their receipt. I smiled and said no, knowing full well I would probably have more fun at the finish with my “0” point score than a middle of the pack score it would have given me.

You are here to have fun, you are here as a representative of the IBA, as a representative of that rallymaster and of motorcyclists across the country. It is always best to put safety first, act with dignity, and do the right thing in public. Remember this is just a pass time and there are no riches waiting for you back at rally headquarters. The story you now have to tell is most likely worth 10 times more than a finishing position that will be forgotten by the time the banquet is over. Getting back safely is the most important thing you will do for your family your rally master, and friends (which will now include that rallymaster and their staff).

Hypothetical Question: You have just run a great rally and are in Wendover, NV with just 113 fast miles across the Great Salt Lake to Salt Lake City and the finish. You have 1 ¼ hours to get there before being timed barred. You pull up second in line to a Utah Highway Patrolman stopping traffic on the freeway completely for an accident where someone fell asleep and drove off onto the Salt Flats flipping their RV. A Life Flight Helicopter lands on the shoulder and shuts down their rotors. Time ticks away as they hold the freeway closed and the EMT's prepare the victims for transport. The patrolman leaves to assist the EMT crews, leaving the cars stopped by a single flare and their own recognizance. All the activity is off on the Salt Flats, the Helo is just on the shoulder with the stopped blades barely in the right lane, you know every Highway Patrol between here and Salt Lake is assisting here, do you:

1. Slip by the lead car and ease past the accident and the Helo and then carefully head towards Salt Lake and the finish?
2. Shut down your motorcycle and resign yourself to seeing your rally tick away while the accident crew finishes their tasks and clears the highway of the Life Flight Helo.

Setting Alternate Rally Goals

I talked about categories to set goals and I gave three:

- 1) Mileage (How many miles do I think I can do).
- 2) Points and Bonuses (base route, alternate route, trying to win, trying to survive).
- 3) Performance at rally tasks (staying on route, sticking to plan, earning all points claimed, claiming all points earned, having fun, being a good rallyist in the eyes of the RM).

There are some other things you can work on and set to make your rally experience more fulfilling and an enjoyable experience. There are many tasks associated with a rally including the ride there and back, the activity leading up to the start, the activities after the rally. Try some things like this:

- 1) Set a goal to create a route that you complete perfectly – if you do that I guarantee you will not care which place in line you finish – you were perfect in your estimation.
- 2) Try to get through tech inspection and the ODO check without incident (RM's love this). Be organized, knowledgeable of the rally rules, and have everything you should.
- 3) Create a step by step process for processing a rallypack and stick to it when the pressure is on. Here is mine ([Rallypack Processing](#))
- 4) Set a goal to finish your routing in a certain amount of time.
- 5) Set a goal of getting so much rest the day before the rally.

- 6) Make sure to check the weather and road conditions before the rally packs are dispersed. Best to do the afternoon or night before the start.
- 7) Pick a great road on the way there or back and try to route yourself over that scenic part of Americana.
- 8) Try not to look at the GPS "Trip" page on the way home and stop for a leisurely lunch or breakfast. Reset the trip page in the middle of your trip home. Try to put your "master" in her place.
- 9) Try to meet and remember (this is the hard part) two people you have corresponded with on the internet but never met face to face – make some friends.
- 10) Buy the rallymaster a drink and thank all the staff you can find. Get to know these guys/gals, they are normally quite experienced OG's and full of great experiences.

In-It-To-Win-It – I have won my share of rallies but I can honestly say that only one time did I ever start with the specific intent to win it, and I spent a year preparing to do just that. Much of my rallying is really against myself as I attempt to perform to the best of my ability, make a good plan, execute it and get all the points that I target. Naturally I am anxious to see how that measures up with other riders and over time, as I have become more proficient, those comparisons have improved, just what I would expect from any activity where experience breeds success.

The ability to self assess, to know how to keep fresh through drastically changing environments, to ride and collect bonuses efficiently, to earn credit for all bonuses claimed, these are skills that take some riders (yours truly) years to refine. As riders become more proficient you see them climb higher on the leader board on a regular basis. I am sure you can name the top three or five rallyist right now and most of those have been at it for a long time (you may be one of them). Just like many in the community I admire them for their skills and abilities but I realize that it is the product of practice and experience that allows them to do some amazing feats with more safety than the average rider displays riding across town. Don't believe me – look at the IBR winners and then look back and see where they finished in prior years.

I remember finishing my first rally in last place with that big Goose Egg over a decade ago, but a couple of years later I finished something like 13th in a big multiday with some 50 riders. How I really improved over that time period was by becoming better at applying the [29 Tips in the Iron Butt Archive of Wisdom](#). I won my first rally after some 4 years or so of rallying and even today I continue to improve my proficiency to make up for my old age (yes, you can cry for me now).

There are cases where a new rallyist hits the podium right out of the gate, but that is the exception. While they can say neener-neener-neener to me all they want, I believe most riders are doing themselves a favor if they start with reasonable expectations and work up from there building good strong rally habits. You set reasonable goals, practice your craft and you will not only become a better rallyist, it will vastly improve your touring and normal riding allowing you to safely cover greater distances with aplomb. You can shortcut the experience and bull your way to a top finish but that has a tendency to catch up to a rider. Let the rallying skill come to you instead of trying to force it and find

your way to the podium. You will get there with skill and wisdom instead of a heavy throttle hand and sleep deprivation.

Set Up a Rally Folder

Before I start the annual rally season I set up a Folder (one of those Two Hole Three Page Flat Folders). Create a folder like this and things will go much smoother with your rallies. Organization is key and a rally folder will have you supremely organized. In this folder goes:

- 1) Copy of License, Registration(s) and proof of insurance for motorcycles (Declaration Page).
- 2) Many Copies of my Checklists and worksheets:
 - a. The Rallypack [Processing Spreadsheet](#) –I make copies of the:
 - i. Bonus List Page – If I have to work manually on a Rallypack, then I use this to list **the points** for each bonus to highlight those that are important and manually sort. I put the “Freebies” in the blank area below the bonus list. I list the checkpoints, gas log and other bonuses that are common in a rally at the bottom so I do not miss those.
 - ii. Route Listing Page – This is where I handwrite the bonuses that I am going to target in order – this goes in my mapcase for me to work off during the rally.
 - iii. Timing Page – I use this for more complex rallies where I need to work over multiple days, multiple time zones, daylight only bonuses and hit small checkpoint windows. This is how I keep myself “On Schedule”. Many use their GPS to do this but I like the old fashioned method – especially if my GPS craps out.
 - b. [Bonus Processing Checklist](#) – this becomes natural but I do have a checklist that I keep and sometimes use to keep me on track. It is good rally technique to use this.
 - c. [Gas Stop Checklist](#). – This should be second nature to most rallyists but if you need to be reminded – this is my checklist. A good thing to review before you start a rally.
 - d. [Checkpoint and Scoring Checklist](#) – want to get all the points you claim and be successful at the scoring table. Then leave yourself some time and use this checklist to process your rally BEFORE you step up to be scored.
- 3) Copy of the Rallypack for each rally you are entered into for the year.
- 4) Copy of each Hotel Reservation Confirmation for each rally.
- 5) Time Zone Map.
- 6) Chart of border crossings with Canada – with open times.

Preparing the Workspace

Your rally starts when you get to Rally Headquarters. If you have internet access get a read on weather and highway conditions. Get through technical inspection and registration and then get some rest before the pressure is on. For many this is the last opportunity to sleep as many have difficulty doing so

the night before a big ride. Before you go the rider meeting or banquet, where the rallypack will be issued, do the following:

- 1) Pack your bags and get ready to leave – set up your rally clothes for the next day.
- 2) Clear a work area and make sure your Photo, Cell phone, Computer and GPS are charged.
- 3) Connect the computer and GPS getting them to talk to each other.
- 4) Clear GPS Bonus by Type (Waypoints)
- 5) Clear GPS Routes
- 6) Open Streets and Trips, Rally Pack [Procesing Checklist](#), [Degree Conversion Spreadsheet](#)
- 7) Have copies of the [Route Listing](#) and [Route Worksheet](#) to work with (enter data on paper forms)
 - a. These are separate “Worksheets “ of my Rally Processing Spreadsheet. Notice the tabs at the bottom of the spreadsheet.
 - b. You should have several copies of this in your “Rally Folder” to work on.
- 8) Name new route for Streets and Trips - Save in Rally Folder
- 9) Enter Checkpoints into S&T and create a direct route - Save
- 10) Fill in Timing Worksheet with Checkpoints and times - calculate hours for leg or rally.
- 11) Determine General Miles to be ridden for the leg (45 mph avg)

You are now prepared to receive and process efficiently your rallypack. You should have all your bags ready to go out to the bike, laundry done and packed, and nothing out but the clothes you will start the rally in.

Freebies

This is my favorite part of Rallying! Be very aware of those bonuses that are essentially free points. Believe me those experienced rallyists NEVER miss any of these. They can be such things as:

- 1) Gas Log
- 2) Rest Stops
- 3) Declare your route
- 4) Take a Picture of a Sunset
- 5) Get a burger from a particular burger chain
- 6) Get a picture of a LEO
- 7) Call in Bonuses

Make sure you understand what is required for your freebies including any time constraints and which time zone is applicable. Be sure to list these separately on your route list and worksheets so you do not miss any. Sometimes they are buried deep in a bnus pack and sometimes they are not even listed as separate bonuses.

Be Flexible – Recognize Patterns, Know your Rallymaster

This covers a whole range of things when planning a rally. I have given you a particular method for coding, recognizing waypoints and making a route. This is a good framework and might be just the ticket for some rally's but not necessarily always.

You need to be able to take this framework and adopt it to what the Rallymaster is presenting you with. For instance there might be threads where you need to get more than one bonus. Be able to recognize arithmetic (each one adds the same amount of points) and geometric threads (where each additional bonus multiplies the points by an increasing amount). You can add a "T" to the code as I did but you can also use a different symbol especially for the geometric progressions so you highlight them when planning. I am going to tell you later that you will need to quickly recognize the most pertinent bonuses to target quickly and create a route. Look for geometric threads then for arithmetic threads and finally large single bonuses. Look for timed bonuses, particularly large ones that have to be completed within a short time from the start of the rally or leg. Look for that premier bonus. Many rallymasters like to put in a feature bonus, something that they really scouted out and it is spectacular, or just unique. Look for this as it will normally be on the primary route.

Know the rallymaster. You will find they have patterns and tendency's – kind of like baseball pitchers, or football teams. I have known some that put their bonuses in the order you will come upon them if you follow the base route (this is important because you could simply skip the whole computer thing and follow the rally pack – if you knew this). I have seen the ones where they have the single premier bonus, something that is spectacular and it will be on the primary route as they do not want you to miss it. Then there are those who maybe did not scout their bonuses well and you will be searching, calling for further directions etc. These are all tendencies that can be helpful if you know them, so know your rallymaster.

Bonus Pitfalls

Here you are trying to make a plan for the next 38 hours and you have planned to ride some 1900 miles figuring 50 miles per hour average. That sounds great until you get to that 100,000 pt bonus and find it requires a three mile hike through thick woods and across a creek. This takes you two hours after you dry out your techsox. What I am saying is that you need to be aware of what you are getting into on each bonus.

It does not require memorization but really just quick scanning of your targets. You should be aware of time restraints on your bonuses but also other requirements such as:

1. Is it in a National Park – these can be hell to get into and out of as many are quite remote and sometimes crowded.
2. Is it in a busy downtown like Chicago or San Francisco. If you know the area it can be a real advantage but if not you could end up in trouble.

3. Does it require much time off the bike. Look for things that require hiking, getting into water (which might require taking gear on and off). Will you need to secure gear for a period of time while you take a hike.
4. Does it require you to get another bonus to get the points for the target (careful).
5. Is it going to require special parking – like going into the Smithsonian.
6. Do you have limited access to the bonus – do you have to take a tram, take a tour, or other time consuming activity to complete the bonus.
7. Is it a long one way drive in and out to get a bonus.
8. If you have to eat something (not just get a receipt) be wary. It may be a very busy place where it is difficult to get seated – otherwise an experienced rallyist will just get a receipt without doing the wait. (I had to get a Beignet receipt from Café DuMond in New Orleans once – I dropped the kickstand in the VIP parking spot just outside the front door ran in and looked at the sitting waitresses and said “I’ve got \$10 for the first Beignet receipt in my hand”. All but one looked curiously at me in all my gear but the other one just walked up to the register and pumped out a receipt for me and I handed her a \$10 spot and left.
9. Gravesites – be careful, these can be big pitfalls as you may be looking at 40 acres of graves and have to find that single one that is knocked over....
10. Even though the bonus says “anytime”, will you be able to get a decent picture in pitch dark. I have seen cases where you could not get close to an item to take a picture, could not get a bike near it to shine headlights, and were basically screwed once you spent four hours riding to get that bonus at 3:00 am in the morning. This is one you may have to just make a educated guess on based on the description of the item in the rally pack. Be aware of large “Scenery” type pictures like a “Mountain Top” or a “Statue” along say a river side.

All of these things can make a bonus take much more time than you anticipate, and do not think for a minute that the rallymaster did not know this also. You need to be aware of these and be able to identify them when you are setting up your plan.

24 Hour Rally

A 24 hour rally is really a sprint in the rally world. It is the most common form of rally since it can be run over a weekend with minimal time off for the participants. Normal procedure is to have rallyists register the afternoon=on before the rally and get through tech inspection. The rally will start usually sometime around daybreak the next morning (usually Saturday) and finish the following morning 24 hours later. After a period of time to compute scores and for riders to get some rest a banquet will ensue where the rider scores will be announced.

This rally is the most difficult in my estimation. You are usually pressured to create the route and a small misstep can be disastrous. The priorities of a rally like this are similar to a NASCAR event – you need to finish, then worry about where you will rank in the group of finishers. In order to do this I specifically look at the following:

1. Pre-Rally Rest – being well rested will allow most to go the full 24 hours without additional rest. That is a huge benefit in a short rally like this.
2. Timing
 - a. When is the Rally over (at what time do I DNF)
 - b. When do penalty minutes start
 - c. When must I be done Scoring (on the clock or after the rally)
3. Checkpoints
 - a. Are they go/no-go (do you DNF if you miss one)
 - b. Are they optional with points
4. Large Bonuses
 - a. Following these will put on the basic route
 - b. Combined with Checkpoints will most likely define the base route.
5. Routing may be just a rough outline depending on what you are presented with.
 - a. As you will see below, I may just do it all by hand without a computer.
 - b. Time permitting I will work it up on computer and at least get a rough route.
6. Get the wheels moving and keep them turning.
 - a. Pack enough food for the day
 - b. Make sure Hydration can be refilled very easily from a convenience store.
 - c. You should have a suite that is good for all weather to minimize gear changes.
 - d. Remember electric clothes – it will be cold at X:30 in the morning.

Notice how most of these things really prioritize just finishing without a DNF. Once you have done these things then you can take the time (if you have it) to fill out the route with additional bonuses.

30-36 Hour Rally

The 30 to 36 hour rally is a stretch. It has all the requirements of the 24 hour rally but now you have up to an additional ½ of a day extra. I approach this just as I do a 24 hour rally but with the intent to take 4 hours out of it for designated rest. This type of rally has all the features as above plus:

1. I calculate my target mileage on a “miles per hour” basis but I back out the rest hours I feel I will want to reserve. For instance: 36 hour rally and I want four hours of rest and feel I can maintain 55 mph average when not resting – then I target 1,760 miles maximum (55mph X 32hours)
2. Using the “Trip Page” of the GPS I maintain my 55 mph average until I get that rest. When resting I shut down the GPS so those hours do not get included in the calculation. Then maintain my 55 mph overall average.
3. I try to get a computer route done if the rallypack is handed out the night before. Still, sleep is more important than a very detailed plan – you can rough it in and refine it on the road.

Multiday Rally

This is where things get turned on their ear. You have many hours to cover and you will be mixing rest with riding time. Personally I feel this is what endurance riding is all about, the ability to ride, rinse and

repeat day after day. I completely change my approach in this type of rally. Much depends on the time you have to plan and I will go over that in the sections to follow. I assume for a multiday that you are planning the night before the start with subsequent planning sessions “On the Clock” at each checkpoint where you get a new set of bonuses.

These rallies do not depend so much making quick and always correct judgments. I liken it to the game of golf. If you have ever played, many holes you make one crappy shot and your score depends on how you recover from that mishit. This is where you really need that “Toolbox of Accomplishments” and know what your capable of.

1. Planning for a multiday will normally be in stages (only a part of it is given to you at a time):
 - a. I will process the full rallypack in these cases.
 - b. I will normally utilize a computer to do my routing and download o GPS.
 - c. I will use the [Route Listing Sheet](#) from the Rallypack Processing Spreadsheet.
 - d. I will sketch in a [Timing Sheet](#) – Click on the “Timing” tab at the bottom of the screen to bring up that worksheet. What I do is fill in the bonuses and checkpoints here using my intended route and the distances between each point. I also fill in times for rest.
 - i. This will tell you how realistic your route is, when you should get to bonuses, if you might miss a window for a bonus.
 - ii. The more time you have to plan – the more detailed this Timing Sheet can be.
2. I will work on an average mph that INCLUDES my rest time. So If I have a 100 hour leg and target 4,500 miles (45 mph average) then that is with rest time.
3. I will periodically stop and check on my progress with the computer. Just to make sure of how things are going and if I might be able to improve or add things. COMMONLY you will have to alter your plan on a multiday rally due to events beyond your control.
4. Do not get flustered on a multiday. You can have many things go wrong and still end up very well. Just like I said about Golf, when you have an errant shot, stay calm and just work on recovering.
 - a. You may pull something out of your “Toolbox” to get back on track when you get out of synch.
 - b. You can always hit the ‘Reset” button, get some rest and regroup. A good night of rest (a nice 8 hours) will ALWAYS give you a very new perspective.

Hours to Plan

This is the most difficult rally for me. You are handed the rallypack one hour before the rally start. Here are things to remember:

1. Look it over quickly and ask any IMPORTANT question you might have. Limit this as BS questions asked are just taking away from your time planning.
 - a. If people get wound up in asking nuisance questions stay at the meeting, something pertinent might come up, but start numbering the bonuses if the rallypack is more than say 20 bonuses.

- i. You may not need, or have time to do the full coding but numbering has to be a priority to assist you to lookup and reference bonuses on the road.
 - b. Highlight any bonus that is timed – especially one that has a small window near the rally start. That will manytimes put on the right track.
 - c. Highlight checkpoints and big bonuses
2. If you are given electronic waypoints get them loaded on the computer and GPS.
3. Identify the Base Route – or the route that you intend to pursue. This can be done with the computer if you have electronic waypoints and have loaded them. You can also do this by hand with a map – YOU SHOULD ALWAYS HAVE MAPS.
 - a. Highlight the checkpoints and time constraints
 - b. Identify all the top value bonuses
 - c. These two items should give you a base route (they may not ALL be on the route) let the checkpoints be the guiding light.
 - d. Once you have it, quickly write these targets down on a Route Sheet – leave some space to add more between these points.
 - e. Note on the route sheet all those bonuses that are between the primary targets and try to fill those in (on yur handwritten route sheet). If they are all in the GPS you can see them and target them on the road but this way you have a double check (having them listed on the route sheet).
 - f. Note all Freebies on the route sheet. DO NOT FORGET YOUR FREEBIES!
4. If you have all the waypoints loaded in the GPS then you are ready to get the wheels rolling going point to point with your target route sheet.
 - a. Check for a big timed bonus – something you need to leave immediately to catch.
 - b. Once you route to the first big bonus or checkpoint – see if there are others along that path.
5. Once safely on the road and you are getting some rally chi going.... Start to add to your GPS route. Add the next big bonus or checkpoint and then look at what you might be able to get on the way.

Night to Plan

You are given the rallypack the night before the rally possibly after a banquet. This is a luxury but still you are on the clock – act like it. The MOST IMPORTANT thing you are going to do this night is SLEEP.

1. Your workspace should be ready
2. Your clothes laid out and everything ready for you to just jump in bed, then out of bed and go to the motorcycle.
3. Just like before. Start processing your rallypack while others are asking questions at the meeting. You should be able to listen and skim at the same time.
 - a. Check over your package for completeness.
 - b. Start numbering
 - c. Check for that critical timed bonus.

- d. Start coding if the meeting goes on way longer than it needs to (not unusual)
 - e. Highlight Checkpoints and big bonuses.
4. Depending on what you are given – a nice file of bonuses (you can just import), or just a rally pack with driving directions will determine what you do.
 - a. The more detail you can get into the computer for routing the better.
 - b. At least try to get largest 30% of the bonuses into the computer (and then GPS)
 - c. Make sure to put checkpoints in accurately – these you cannot screw up on.
 - d. Put in the other bonuses if you can. If you have to just “rough” them in, do so and use the little “e” at the end of the code to tell you that you ESTIMATED that location. That give you the visual of the bonus on your GPS but also tells you that you must use the driving instructions to get there.
 5. Define your route capturing as many of the large bonuses as you can.
 6. If you have time make more possible routes for comparison.
 7. Select a route and fill out the “Route Listing” worksheet
 8. Take this route and fill out the “Timing” worksheet to give you and estimation of bonuses you might miss due to time constraints. This will also give you something to judge how you are progressing during your rally (are you ahead or behind schedule).
 9. Once you have all the detail you can into the computer route, download the waypoints to the GPS.
 - a. You have the overall plan on your computer (S&T)
 - b. You have a manual list of target bonuses, you have a timing worksheet to work from.

Now pack everything up, charge your computer and go to bed. Do not work on second thoughts about your route. Try to think about something else and get a good nights sleep.

On these rallies other riders will be milling around before the official start. That is dangerous because they will ask where you are going and offer their ideas. DO NOT LISTEN – you have a plan, it is a good plan if you followed your checklists. If you execute you will do much better than if you change everything at the start of the rally – even if does look like more points. It is similar to taking a multiple choice test – remember your first guess is about as good as it gets, leave it alone!.

Days to Plan

Now you are in my wheelhouse! Relatively new are the Rally’s where the rallymaster gives the bonuses a week or even a month before the rally. There is a catch to this, normally you do not get a nice neat text file with waypoints described by latitude and longitude. No, usually you get the same old rally pack with basic written directions or maybe even no directions at all. Now you have the time before the rally to find the location of the bonus on the internet.

1. Scout the bonus in as much detail as you deem necessary.
 - a. Google is your friend
 - b. Use Google Earth to scout the area around the bonus.
 - c. Call for open hours if you need to.

- d. Check parking, ingress/egress and other special requirements.
 - e. Once you have enough information to know exactly where the bonus is and the best way to capture it, move on to the next one. I have seen people researching every minuscule aspect of a bonus ad nauseam. Remember the goal is to define a bonus, not write a paper.
2. Process the bonus pack just as you would normally – Number and Code.
 3. Using your research you can put all the bonuses into your mapping software.
 - a. Once you are done you have a terrific (and uber accurate) map of bonuses to work from.
 4. Make sure you have those Freebies Highlighted, Listed and ready to Roll. Work them into the plan as quickly as possible helping you to get off to a fast start.
 5. Create Several Routes:
 - a. One may stick out to you but have alternatives.
 - b. Alternatives allow you to make a change for weather or other reason just prior to rally start.
 - c. These plans are normally covering many days worth of riding and a large geographical area – set up each route BOTH clockwise and counterclockwise. This allows you to make a very simple but critical last minute change that can completely alter how a huge weather front will affect you for days.
 - d. Rate your different plans (Favorite, Second, Third). You do this by POINTS and feasibility of completing the route!!! Use a comparison spreadsheet as I talked about in Lesson 201 to compare routes.
 6. Time each route: This is where having the time makes a huge difference
 - a. You have seen my handwritten worksheet. That is fine for a quick set up. Now with a lot of time to plan we are going to use something much more accurate – a spreadsheet.
 - b. [Timing Spreadsheet](#) – This is a complex worksheet but is designed to be altered to fit your rally. Just be careful of the timing formulas and how you use them.
 - i. This is a multipage Spreadsheet and you can add more pages for more routes.
 - ii. There are two routes entered as examples.
 1. Fill in the First Worksheet with ALL the bonuses. This will help you to organize threads, see Freebies, and then finally to sort them by value. You can see I have the highest third in red, middle in Blue and Lowest value third in Yellow.
 2. Fill in the bonus information on each of the separate “Route” pages. Fill in the yellow information.
 3. Put the “rest” periods where you want them.
 4. Careful copying the formulas in the ETA Column. There are three formulas. One for the first row, one for subsequent and a special one for the rest periods. These formulas will use the “Average Moving Speed” and the “Time for Each Bonus” to calculate ETA.
 - a. You can alter these formulas, just be careful. Most likely for alteration is a special bonus that requires more time than average. Or a rest period of a special length of time.

5. This ETA information is used by the Stopwatch column and subsequent “Stp Clk” columns, you should not have to alter the later two at all.
6. Remember to put .0417 in the Time Zone column when you change going west to east, and -.0417 when traveling east to west (I use MTN zone as the baseline for this spreadsheet) (excel works in days - .0417 is 1/24th of a day or 1 hour).
- iii. You can now tweak the Average MPH and the Time Spent on Each Bonus to get the route to work in your time frame.
- iv. This exercise will:
 1. Highlight when you should be at any bonus, give you a timing plan
 2. Show if you will be at a bonus when it is not open and other problems.
 3. Give you a shot of realism on your route (if it takes much over 55 mph – you better be good at this stuff).
7. Finally this spreadsheet has a page for comparing your routes. You can see I put in my points in categories but you can really alter this to meet any need.
 - a. This makes for a highly accurate estimate of what a route can do.
 - b. It makes you think about those “Freebies” (Do I really have time to take 1 hour for the slow ride exercise?)
8. Print all your route sheets out and have them ready before your rally starts (This is your PLAN). Get a read on road an weather conditions and then make the decision on your route before you start.

Safety is Your First Goal

I am going to give you some of the most valuable information I can possibly proffer in this short section. I always try to put some thoughts together about the people that I love and that love me (yes, I do have a mother, I was not made in a test tube as rumored) before I turn the key to start a rally. I think about how life would be for them if something happened to me and this seems to give me a sense of perspective to the task at hand. Remember, this is supposed to be fun, it is a hobby, it is just a big boy game. Taken too seriously there are can be very serious consequences.

Every rider is different but there are particular signs of pending danger that most experience and you need to be able to recognize those and be cognizant of the fact you are experiencing them. I work on a one strike basis – one strike and I look for a rest area, two strikes and I pull over at next exit. Here is a list of my strikes:

1. Do not dim lights for oncoming traffic.
2. Do not dim lights as I approach traffic.
3. Wander in my lane (not hold my line).
4. Pass a turn.
5. Miss a V1 report.
6. Misjudge closing speed with other traffic.
7. Do not anticipate traffic and get surprised by something like a merging car.

8. Get startled by something like entering an underpass.
9. See giant lizards crawling along the roadside.
10. Find myself cruising too slow or too fast (I like to be within 10 of speed limit).

This is not a complete list – basically when I start to see small screw-ups I take notice and do not ignore them. Good sleep is one of the most important things you will do on a rally and it is good to be familiar with Don Arthurs writings in this area:

[Don Arthurs PDF on Fatigue](#)

The most dangerous time in any rally is the start and the end. At the start adrenaline is running high so you should try to calm yourself. Remember to do the basics, keep a clear distance from other riders, secure your rally pack and flag and concentrate on just getting out on the main roads safely without incident. From there ease your way to the first bonus, take your time and get yourself into a rhythm. Once the first bonus is captured you are well on your way to a great ride.

The end of a rally requires special attention. Many of the accidents happen after the last bonus is secured, especially if you have plenty of time to get back to the finish. This provides an opportunity for your mind to shut down and for you to get too relaxed with a feeling that you are “done”. **YOU ARE NOT DONE!** You still need to safely get back to rally headquarters and now is the time to be **MOST AWARE** of symptoms of exhaustion. Be vigilant about the strike system I presented earlier. Stop at a rest area if you get the opportunity and the time – just for grins and a good stretch. Have a smoke if you do that, maybe even a little nap if necessary, repack the bike, organize your paperwork. What you really need to do is to regain your attention span, get the juices flowing again and bring up that alertness level. If you find an open restaurant maybe even stop get a cup of coffee and get that paperwork squared away.

Dehydration – special attention is required to Hydration while rallying. Most of the old pros know this and are aware of the warning signs. Here is a list of some of the signs of dehydration:

- Dry mouth
- The eyes stop making tears
- Sweating may stop
- Muscle cramps
- Nausea and vomiting
- Heart palpitations
- Lightheadedness (especially when standing)
- Weakness
- Decreased urine output

You keep this from happening to you by staying hydrated but sometimes we just get stuck trying to cross Death Valley. When you start to experience these symptoms it is time to get off the road and find a cool place to take in some clear fluids. This means water, jello, popsicles, gatorade, powerade or other fluid replacements.

No Rally Was Ever Won from a Jail Cell

I will not take credit for this saying but will attribute it to Tom M. who knows about these things!! You will never win a rally if you are doing things that will get your bike confiscated, have you held for hearing or any other such thing. In Tom's case it was a warrant for an old ticket he paid that did not get properly recorded (something he really had nothing to do with). Still, it is a lesson learned and some of the things that can get you in such a situation are:

- 1) Reckless driving – considered in some areas to be 20 over the speed limit.
- 2) Drinking and driving (OK, we all know the 12 hour “Bottle to Throttle” rule)
- 3) Stunting – in some places this can be as simple as standing on your pegs.
- 4) Running from police – you know when they spin around if it is you they are targeting.
- 5) Carrying Contraband

Hopefully you are out having fun and that is easily attained without endangering the public, embarrassing yourself or having a rallymaster called on the carpet by local police.

When Everything turns to S#%t

So you have done it all. You got all the bonuses coded, entered into a mapping program and made the perfect route that is now downloaded to your GPS. It is day 8 of the IBR and you just ran over a rock and bent a rim and it cannot hold a seal anymore.....

When stuff goes wrong your priorities (OK, MY priorities) are this:

1. Be Safe – the side of the road is a dangerous place to be. You need to get out of there.
2. Assess your situation – will it be a short fix not impacting your rally progress or is it something that will cause you to be late back to the finish? Do you have enough Duct Tape??
3. Appraise the Rallymaster of your situation – so they do not send out the Highway Patrol looking for you.
4. If you can finish the rally – even with a big penalty or with limited points – do it, show some pride.
5. If you cannot finish on time and are going to DNF – do it. Get back to the finish and the banquet and have a good time with your friends.
6. If you can continue on with your rally – but have lost some time. You need to take some time to replan.
 - a. If you barely have time to get back to rally HQ - GET MOVING, DO NOT STOP.

- b. If you got quite a bit of time. This is where it is good to have a charged computer. Get off the road and pull out the computer and make up a quick route back to HQ picking up the most valuable bonuses that you can, list your target bonuses and program that route into the GPS.
 - c. You have only a moderate amount of time. Skip the computer, make a quick route on the GPS back to Rally HQ and look at what bonuses it naturally passes by. Try to add those to the route using via's (most valuable first) and see what you can get. Incidentally – THIS IS WHY I CODE MY BONUSSES, so I can easily look at the GPS screen or the waypoint list, and quickly see which ones I need to target when on the fly.
7. If you are in the middle of a Multiday event and you are just feeling like it is no use. Hit the "Reset" button and check into a NICE hotel and get a good 8 hours of solid rest, a good shower and get all cleaned up. You will be amazed how that will clear your thoughts.

Unless you are limping along on a seriously injured bike or are not feeling well yourself, then try to get back to Rally HQ and show everyone your grit and determination. Remember my section of not being afraid to DNF.