

The 2011 Iron Butt Rally – Day -2
Saturday, June 18, 2011

Not Your Typical Collection of Motorcycles

There are now about 100 motorcycles in the parking lot of the Seattle Airport Marriott, but they are not the kind of motorcycles the general public is used to seeing gathered in large numbers. There are only a few “cruiser” -style motorcycles and none of them have obnoxiously loud exhaust systems. BMWs outnumber Harley-Davidsons by about 10 to 1, just the opposite of what would be expected based on total sales. There are lots of Hondas and Yamahas, but they are almost exclusively touring and sport-touring models, not cruisers or sport models.

Invariably, there is at least one motorcycle in every rally that is considered to be in what is affectionately referred to as the “hopeless class.” This year, that honor goes to a 1975 Triumph Trident ridden by John Young from the United Kingdom. Members of the Tech Inspection team have been placing bets on how far the Triumph is going to make it. Some are betting that it’s going to be out before Checkpoint 1. Others are more specifically betting that it won’t make it out of Seattle.

The Riders

The people who rode these motorcycles into the parking lot aren’t typical either. Almost without exception, they were dressed from head to toe in gear designed for riding in all kinds of weather rather than looking cool at the local coffee shop or bar. And based on the latest reports, these riders will get more than their share of bad weather during the first leg alone.

Typically, about 100 riders are selected from the applications submitted to compete in the Iron Butt Rally. This year, economic conditions have result in several riders dropping out since they were initially selected and it looks like about 88 riders will be on the starting line this year.

As described in my Day -2 report for the 2009 Rally, the process used to select entrants from the applications submitted is designed to ensure a broad range of riders will have a chance to compete. At one end of the spectrum, preference is given to veterans of previous Iron Butt Rallies. At the other end of the spectrum, several slots are set aside for the most “hopeless” of the applicants, primarily based on whether they are intending to ride an antique motorcycle or another motorcycle especially unsuited for long distance riding. Several spots are also set aside for riders, be they Iron Butt Rally veterans or not, who have done extremely well in other rallies.

This year, 29 of the riders are returning veterans. Two additional riders competed in a previous Iron Butt Rally but ended up in the “did not finish” (DNF) category. An additional 24 riders finished the 5-Day Iron Butt 5000 Rally in 2010, which guaranteed those riders a spot in the 2011 Iron Butt Rally. One additional rider was a DNF in the Iron Butt 5000, but was accepted because the circumstances of the DNF were beyond the

rider's control. Most of the rest of the field will be riding a multi-day rally for the first time.

(The next couple of pages identify the riders entered and, in most cases, the make and model of motorcycles they were intending to ride when they submitted their application. I'll provide an update after all of the riders have completed the check-in process.)

The returning Iron Butt Rally veterans include four of the Top Ten finishers in 2009. Californian Eric Jewell, who finished 3rd in 2009, will be riding a Honda ST1300 in his seventh Iron Butt Rally. Always a strong finisher, Eric is clearly one of the favorites to win this year. Chris Sakala, a BMW R1200RT rider from Maryland, finished 4th in 2009 and 2nd in 2005 and is another potential winner this year. Another strong contender is Ken Meese, a BMW K1300GT rider from California, who finished 9th in 2009 and who has won numerous other rallies. Peter Behm, a Yamaha FJR 1300 rider from Minnesota, finished 10th in 2009 and is another veteran rider with the capability of another podium finish this year.

Other returning veterans who finished in the top 20 in 2009 are Roger Sinclair, 12th place finisher from Virginia, riding a BMW R1150 GSA (Adventure), Dick Peek, 15th place finisher from Utah, riding a FJR 1300; Brian Jack, 18th place finisher from Washington riding a BMW R1150GSA; Mark Crane, 19th place finisher from California, riding a BMW R1200GSA; and Nancy Oswald 20th place finisher from Maryland riding a BMW R1200GS.

Other returning Iron Butt Rally veterans are:

Jennyfer Audet (Canada) riding a Honda CBR1100XX;
Michael Boge (Idaho) riding a Honda ST1300;
Wendy Crockett (California) riding a Yamaha FJR 1300;
Jeff and Carol Fremder (Wisconsin) riding a BMW R1150RT;
Jim Frens (New Hampshire) riding a Honda GL1800;
Art Garvin (Ohio) riding a Honda GL1800;
Curt Gran (Wisconsin) riding a Honda ST1300;
John Harrison (Alabama) riding a Honda ST1300;
Andy Kirby (Massachusetts) riding a Honda ST 1300;
Tom Loftus (California) riding a Honda ST1300;
Gerhard Memmen-Kreuger (Germany) riding a Honda GL1800;
Terry Neale (California) riding a Yamaha FJR 1300;
Buford Neely (Mississippi) riding a BMW R1200RT;
Dennis Powell (Iowa) riding a Honda GL1800;
Tom and Rosie Sperry (California) riding a Honda GL1800;
Bill Thweatt (Texas) riding a Honda ST1300;
Jacques Titolo (Canada) riding a Kawasaki ZX12R;
Bill Wade (New Jersey) riding a BMW R1200GSA; and
Jim Winterer (Minnesota) riding a Suzuki DL 650 V-Strom.

Californian Alex Harper is another entrant with Iron Butt Rally experience, but Alex was a DNF in the 2009 rally in a failed attempt to run the rally on a 1970s vintage Suzuki

RE5 rotary. This year, Alex stands a better chance of finishing riding a Yamaha FJR 1300. Tony Hudson (South Carolina), who was a DNF in both the 2009 Iron Butt Rally and the Iron Butt 5000, is also entered again this year riding a GL 1800.

24 other entrants competing in the Iron Butt Rally for the first time are veterans of the 5-day Iron Butt 5000 Rally that was held in 2010, including the winner of that rally Minnesotan John Coons. By defeating several Top Ten finishers of the Iron Butt Rally, Coons has proven his ability to finish at the front of the pack. He will be riding the same motorcycle that carried him to victory last year: an 18-year old BMW R1100RS.

Other veterans of the Iron Butt 5000 who will be riding in their first Iron Butt Rally include:

George Barker (Wisconsin) riding a Honda GL1800
Doug Barrett (California) riding a Yamaha FJR 1300
Greg and Pat Blewett (Kentucky) riding a Honda GL1800
W. (Wayne) Boyter (Texas) riding a BMW R1200RT
Peter Delean (Canada) riding a Yamaha FJR 1300
Kurt Dix (Florida) riding a Kawasaki Concours
Bobby Fox (Texas) riding a BMW R1200 GSA
Neil Hejny (Arizona) riding a Honda GL1800
Dave Hembroff (Ohio) riding a Yamaha FJR1300
Darrin Hicks (Canada) riding a Harley Davidson Electra Glide
Mike Jackman (Florida) riding a Honda GL1800
Brian Johnson (Minnesota) riding a BMW K1200LT
Perry Karsten (Canada) riding a Yamaha FJR 1300
Jeremy Loveall (Kentucky) riding a BMW R1200RT
Michael Mehaffy (Missouri) riding a Yamaha FJR1300
Brant Moteelall (Minnesota) riding a Yamaha FJR1300
Bryan Neagle (California) riding a Honda ST 1300
Corey Nuehring (Iowa) riding a Yamaha FJR1300
Bob Rippy (Missouri) riding a BMW R1200RT
Karl Snell (Georgia) riding a BMW R1200GS
John Stamps (Florida) riding a BMW 1200RT
Kirsten Talken-Spaulding (Virginia) riding a BMW R1200RT
Robert Wilensky (Pennsylvania) riding a Suzuki DL 1000 V-Strom

Brian Bray (Georgia) also ran in the Iron Butt 5000, but became a DNF due to the damage his motorcycle suffered when he hit a bear. Rally staff are still disappointed that Brian didn't get a photo of his flag on the unconscious bear. Brian is riding a Suzuki SV650.

The 32 riders without previous Iron Butt Rally or Iron Butt 5000 experience are:

Steve Aikens (New Mexico) riding a BMW R1200RT
Roger Allen (Florida) riding a BMW R1200GSA
Kathleen Allen (Florida) riding a BMW R1200GSA
Cameron Brister (Oregon) riding a FJR 1300

Robert Chadwick (Missouri) riding a Harley-Davidson Road Glide Ultra
Patrick Clark (Washington) riding a Yamaha Road Star
Shane and Annette Cudlin (Australia) riding a Honda GL1800
Earl Damron (Kentucky) riding a Kawasaki KLR650
Stan Dulemba (Georgia) riding a BMW R1200RT
Howard Entman (Tennessee) riding a Yamaha FJR 1300
David Fick (Virginia) riding a BMW R1200GSA
Wallace French (Massachusetts) riding a BMW R1150RT
John Frick (Ohio) riding a BMW K1200LT
Jon Good (California) riding a BMW R1200RT
Colin Goodall (Canada) riding a FJR 1300
Greg Guillermo (Arizona) riding a Yamaha FJR1300
Rob Jaime (Maine) riding a Honda GL1800
Robert Joers (Wisconsin) riding a Honda GL1800
Michael and Betty Ligons (Missouri) riding a Honda GL1800
Andy Mackey (California) riding a BMW 1200GS Adventure
Tim Masterson (Texas) riding a BMW R1200GS Adventure
Dean McCurdy (Michigan) riding a BMW R1200RT
Aaron and Rena Miller (Missouri) on a Honda GL1800;
Chris Ogden (California) riding a BMW R1200GS
Daniel Roth (Georgia) riding a BMW R1200GS
Rod Schween (Canada) riding a BMW R1200GSA
Don Speck (Montana) riding a Harley-Davidson Road Glide
John Young (UK) riding a 1969 Triumph Trident
Cliff Wall (Texas) riding a Honda GL1800
Cletha Walstrand (Utah) riding a BMW F650GS Twin
Philip Weston (UK) riding a Yamaha FZS1000 Fazer
Shuey Wolfe (Florida) riding a Honda ST1300A

As indicated in the lists above, there are 12 women entered, 6 riding pillion and 6 piloting their own bike. The veteran pillion riders are Rosie Sperry (riding with husband Tom) and Carol Fremder (riding with husband Jeff). This is the first Iron Butt Rally for Rena Miller and her husband Aaron, along with Michael and Betty Ligons but their impressive finish in the 2010 Land of Enchantment Rally, besting one of the top ten finishers in the 2009 Iron Butt Rally, makes these two teams a force to be reckoned with. Other first time pillion riders are Pat Blewett and Annette Cudlin.

Of the women riding their own bike, Nancy Oswald, Wendy Crockett, and Jennyfer Audet all were finishers in the 2009 Iron Butt Rally. Kirsten Talken-Spaulling was a finisher in the Iron Butt 5000 in spite of a broken wheel during the first leg. Cletha Walstrand was a finisher in the 10-day "Ten 'n Ten" Rally last year. This will be the first multi-day rally for Kathleen Allen; however, she has completed multi-day certificate rides.

Tech Inspection Begins

Seattle greeted the riders lining up for Tech Inspection this morning with some of its famous liquid sunshine. While inspecting vehicles in the rain, several problems were identified with auxiliary fuel systems needing to be more securely mounted. Several other bikes required modifications to the location of vent lines.

Only one bike had a problem with fuel capacity. Bill Wade presented his BMW R1200GS Adventure for inspection with an auxiliary fuel tank labeled as holding 3.0 gallons. The manufacturer's specification for the stock tank is 8.7 gallons. Since there are no exemptions for mathematically-challenged riders, Dale Wilson called for an actual measurement of the auxiliary tank to confirm the apparent problem with the 11.5 gallon limit on total fuel capacity.

After a trip to the closest gasoline station to purchase fuel, I unpacked all of my fuel measurement equipment and went through the process of determining exactly how much gasoline the auxiliary tank would hold. Unfortunately for Bill, the label on the auxiliary tank proved to be correct; it took 2.98 gallons. Slightly bending the rules, the Chief Technical Inspector agreed to allow Bill to use some steel chain to displace the 0.2 gallon overage. After a quick shopping trip Bill returned with what he thought was way more than enough chain. It turns out that almost 12 pounds of chain was just enough. Onlookers were amazed to see how much chain is required to displace just 0.2 gallons of gasoline.

Dale Wilson Oversees Adjustment to Bill Wade's Auxiliary Tank Capacity



Most riders got through the odometer check okay, but an accident (unrelated to our group) on Interstate 5 caused some delay. Several riders have deferred running the odometer check until tomorrow morning.

Lisa Stevens Instructs Alex Harper at the Beginning of the Odometer Check



The Mandatory Rookies Meeting

At 4:00 p.m. all of the “rookies” entered in the rally were required to attend a meeting during which six-time Iron Butt Rally veteran Jeff Earls provided advice especially important for riders who have never finished a multi-day rally. The thrust of Jeff’s presentation was to admonish rookies that they need to recognize that it is almost impossible for them to understand how draining an 11-day rally can be and that getting adequate rest should be their most important consideration.

One comment Jeff made that rang true with the few IBR staff in the room probably went in one ear and out the other for the rookies. He told them to sort through what they were planning to carry in their saddle bags and send half of it home tomorrow.

Tomorrow

Following the completion of tech inspection and rider check-in, the riders’ meeting is at 4:00 p.m. tomorrow afternoon. The pre-rally banquet begins at 5:30. The rally

instructions and bonus listings will probably be handed out by about 6:30 p.m. Riders will then have to make the first important decision of this rally: How much time to spend optimizing their route for Leg 1 and how much time to leave for sleep. The sound you hear about 6:30 pm Pacific Time will be their collective jaws hitting the floor. Stay tuned.

Tom Austin

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