

2009 Iron Butt Rally, Epilog  
Wednesday, September 9, 2009

It Was the Best of Times...

What an incredible performance we had the pleasure to follow during the 11 days of the 2009 Iron Butt Rally. Jim Owen and Jeff Earls ran neck and neck right from the start, made very similar bonus choices, didn't experience major mechanical problems, and reached the check-in table at the finish together.

**Jeff Earls Shows His I.D. Card at the Finish While Jim Owen Retrieves His I.D.**



Owen and Earls had excellent route plans, perfectly matched to their riding capabilities, and almost perfectly executed. Third place finisher Eric Jewell also had an extraordinarily good route plan that was well-matched to his extraordinarily efficient riding ability, but missed a couple of important bonuses by just minutes. The combination of routing and riding demonstrated by these top finishers borders on unbelievable. They each covered more than 12,000 miles in 11 days over challenging routes while staying safe. But the pure competition exhibited was a thing of beauty for spectators and Rally staff.

### ...It Was the Worst of Times

Shortly after the banquet on Friday night, Australian Davo Jones died at a local trauma center as the result of a head injury he sustained following a collision with a large deer just hours before the end of the Rally. A local sheriff deputy was first on the accident scene on US-95 just south of the U.S./Canadian border. The officer, who found Davo attempting to get up, reported that Davo was traveling less than 45 mph at the time of the deer strike, but he was not wearing his helmet. Other witnesses at the scene confirm that the helmet was strapped to the bike. What might otherwise have been an accident that the rider would have walked away from has resulted in a tragedy. Our hearts go out to Davo's family.

### Strong at the Finish

Jim Owen outdid everyone else on Leg 3 with 78,166 points. Jeff Earls had the second highest Leg 3 total with 74,652 points. 3<sup>rd</sup> place finisher Eric Jewell was also a strong finisher with 72,877 points, but he had to take a 2,490 point penalty for arriving late. The top three all scored the three 7,000+ point bonuses at Thunder Bay, Gay, Michigan, and Manitowish Waters, Wisconsin.

Four other riders had exceptionally strong finishes that pulled them up in the final standings. Chris Sakala moved from 7<sup>th</sup> to 4<sup>th</sup> with a final leg score of 73,009. Greg Marbach moved from 12<sup>th</sup> to 5<sup>th</sup> place with 71,743 points on the final leg. Mike Hutsal moved from 20<sup>th</sup> place to 6<sup>th</sup> place with 69,652 points on Leg 3. Rick Miller had 71,092 points on Leg 3 (after accounting for 2,130 penalty points), which pulled him all of the way from 38<sup>th</sup> place to 7<sup>th</sup> place. Besides the top three finishers, Marbach, Hutsal, and Miller were the only other riders that scored Thunder Bay, Gay, Michigan, and Manitowish Waters, Wisconsin.

The other top ten finishers, Bob Lilley, Ken Meese, and Peter Behm, scored between about 59,000 and 61,000 points on the final leg. Meese was the only top ten finisher who did not include Gay, Michigan, on his route.

Michael Evans, Roger Sinclair, Matt Watkins, and Andy Mills slipped out of the top ten with Leg 3 point totals ranging from about 54,000 to 57,000. They finished in 11<sup>th</sup> through 14<sup>th</sup>, solidly in the Gold Medal category

Other Gold Medal category finishers, placing 15<sup>th</sup> through 23<sup>rd</sup>, were Dick Peek, Rick Sauter, John Jordan, Brian Jack, Mark Crane, Nancy Oswald, Andy Kirby, Chuck Gittner, and John Langan. In 20<sup>th</sup> place Oswald was the only female rider to earn Gold Medal points. All of the riders earning the 99,000 points required for the Gold Medal category demonstrated their ability to both do big miles and route efficiently.

### The Middle of the Pack

Between the top 23 and the DNFs were an incredible variety of riders ranging from former Iron Butt Rally winner George Barnes to three riders that had never competed in any rally before: Wendy Crockett, Bob Elliot, and Barry Bertram. Some of these riders

can do big miles but have trouble with routing. Others can efficiently route but can't do the big miles. A few can do both but had mechanical problems, run-ins with deer, and/or made paperwork errors that kept them from the top of the pack.

### Successful 2<sup>nd</sup> Tries

Seven of the riders in this year's rally failed to qualify as finishers when they rode in 2007. All seven apparently learned from their 2007 experience and made it this year. Bill Wade and Chris McGaffin were in the silver medal category with more than 91,000 points. Joel Rappoport, Jim Mulcahy, Maura Gatensby, Bob Collin, and David Bourdeaux were all between 81,000 and 84,000 points.

### DNFs

Of the 101 riders that started, 16 did not make it to the finish and 15 made it to the finish with insufficient points to qualify as a finisher. Some of the 16 who failed to make Spokane had accidents. Others had mechanical issues. Some chose to withdraw for personal reasons or because they felt they were too far behind to qualify as a finisher.

Some of the 15 who made it to Spokane had mechanical problems that cost them a lot of time. Others lost a lot of points at the scoring table due to errors made in collecting and claiming bonuses. Others simply did a poor job routing and were unable to prepare a route with a sufficient number of points per mile of travel required. A few just couldn't keep up the required pace.

Some of the riders who ended up in the DNF category had little or no rally experience and it showed. At the other end of the spectrum, former top ten finisher and normally detail-oriented veteran, Alan Barbic made an uncharacteristic mistake by failing to have all his materials with him at the scoring table at the end of Leg 2.

### Routing Options for Leg 3

I may not have the routes exactly right, but the following two figures illustrate the extreme differences between the routing choices riders made on the last leg. Jim Owen stopped at 18 bonus locations on his 5,051 mile ride from Santa Ana, California to Gay, Michigan, and then to Spokane, Washington. His route took him through 12 states and 5 Canadian provinces: California, Nevada, Arizona, Utah, Colorado, Wyoming, South Dakota, Minnesota, Wisconsin, Michigan, Ontario, Manitoba, Saskatchewan, Alberta, British Columbia, Idaho, and Washington.

In contrast, Jerry White scored sufficient points to finish in the middle of the pack while travelling through only 5 states and one Canadian province: California, Nevada, Oregon, Washington, British Columbia, and Idaho. He visited 19 bonus locations during his 2,847 mile ride. There were a number of routing options that would exceed the 40,000 point Leg 3 target for finisher status that required a ride of less than 3500 miles, but Jerry's was the shortest.

### Jim Owen's 5051 Mile Leg 3 Ride



### Jerry White's 2,847 Mile Leg 3 Ride



### The Blackout Controversy

Although riders have blogged or posted to Internet forums during previous rallies, this year it appeared that things might be getting out of hand. There were concerns on multiple levels. There was a safety concern associated with the distraction that would be

caused by riders engaged in electronic communications while actually riding. There was also a safety-related concern associated with riders spending time communicating with the outside world when they should be sleeping. Another concern was the use of such communications to provide information to other riders that would be considered undue assistance. Finally, there was also the concern among several top IBR staff that riders willing to take the time and energy to post or blog during the Iron Butt Rally were demonstrating a lack of commitment and a lack of respect for the Rally.

It was an 11<sup>th</sup> hour decision to limit rider communications during the 2009 rally. Because riders did not have the benefit of seeing written rules, there was greater flexibility in enforcement than will occur in the future.

The limits on Spot tracking that were imposed will probably be modified in the future. It should be possible to allow limited Spot updates, but there wasn't sufficient time to work out a protocol this year.

### The Iron Butt Goes Digital

The first use of digital cameras and electronic waypoints went quite smoothly. Riders had relatively few problems with either cameras or the thumb drives containing the waypoints. One exception was Roger Sinclair, who broke two cameras during the rally and had to waste time shopping for replacements. Riders who heeded the recommendations to purchase waterproof, ruggedized cameras had no problems.

Only one rider was unable to read the thumb drives. This year, we provided the waypoints to the riders via e-mail, something we may not do in future rallies without charging penalty points.

Something that went hand in hand with the transition to electronic waypoints is that directions to bonus locations were not included in the printed bonus listing. Riders were expected to use a GPS and mapping software for routing assistance.

Only one bonus location turned out to be a problem for several riders: the Young Life Christian farm near Antelope, Oregon on Leg 3 (bonus code "BAG"). Although over half of the riders that attempted this bonus did it easily, some riders thought it was impossible because their GPS routed them on an impassible goat trail of a road. Some riders attempted the road and dropped their bikes, one requiring a wrecker to get the bike back on the road. The problem was that there are two different roads leading to the bonus location. Some riders who approached from the east were routed onto the goat trail over private land. Riders who approached from the west were routed onto a relatively good gravel road.

A few riders who first went to the goat trail correctly concluded that it was not the type of road we would intentionally send riders over and identified the alternative way in (which is clearly shown in mapping programs like Street Atlas). Others documented where they were and left without getting the bonus photo.

After scoring was completed, IBR staff discussed whether there should have been an exception made in this case to provide written instructions along with the coordinates. A Solomon-like decision was made that was not accurately communicated at the banquet. Riders who failed to take the proper photo were given the points for the purpose of finisher status and medal level, but the points did not count toward their finishing position.

The updated finishing positions are as follows:

Position	Name	Motorcycle	Miles	Points	Category
1	Jim Owen	BMW R1200RT	12,706	139,833	Gold
2	Jeff Earls	BMW K1200GT	12,153	136,090	Gold
3	Eric Jewell	Honda ST1300	12,090	130,338	Gold
4	Chris Sakala	BMW R1200RT	12,238	126,481	Gold
5	Greg Marbach	Yamaha FJR1300	11,931	122,021	Gold
6	Mike Hutsal	Honda ST1300	11,321	117,843	Gold
7	Rick Miller	Honda Gold Wing	11,388	114,326	Gold
8	Bob Lilley	BMW K1200LT	12,268	111,836	Gold
9	Ken Meese	BMW K1200GT	11,047	111,129	Gold
10	Peter Behm	Yamaha FJR1300	11,891	109,350	Gold
11	Michael Evans	Yamaha FJR1300	11,535	109,020	Gold
12	Roger Sinclair	Kawasaki Concours14	12,365	108,903	Gold
13	Matt Watkins	Yamaha FJR1300	12,502	108,653	Gold
14	Andy Mills	Victory Vision	11,410	108,314	Gold
15	Dick Peek	Yamaha FJR1300	11,401	107,138	Gold
16	Rick Sauter	Honda Gold Wing	10,282	106,003	Gold
17	John Jordan	BMW R1150GS	10,302	105,321	Gold
18	Brian Jack	BMW R1150GS	12,629	105,231	Gold
19	Mark Crane	BMW R1200GS	11,378	104,405	Gold
20	Nancy Oswald	BMW R1200GS	11,005	103,800	Gold
21	Andy Kirby	Honda ST1300	12,135	103,343	Gold
22	John Langan	Honda Gold Wing	10,858	99,120	Gold
23	Gerhard Memmen-Krueger	Honda Gold Wing	9,968	98,643	Silver
24	Joseph Leggett	BMW R1200GSA	10,361	96,993	Silver
25	Chuck Gittner	BMW K1200LT	12,669	96,818*	Gold
26	Wendy Crockett	Yamaha FJR1300	10,500	96,033	Silver
27	Bill Thweatt	Honda ST1300	10,724	95,251	Silver
28	Buford Neely	Yamaha FJR1300	9,939	95,073	Silver
29	Paul Allison	Honda Gold Wing	9,642	94,515	Silver
30	Tom/Rosie Sperry	Honda Gold Wing	10,233	94,304	Silver
31	Bob St. George	Yamaha FJR1300	9,613	94,266	Silver
32	Kevin Lechner	Honda ST1300	12,001	93,405*	Silver
33	Chris McGaffin	Yamaha FJR1300	10,088	93,007	Silver
34	Jeff/Milinda Bakker	Honda Gold Wing	10,110	92,888	Silver

35	Greg Rice	Honda Gold Wing	10,962	92,614	Silver
36	George Barnes	BMW K1200LT	11,146	91,234	Silver
37	Dennis Powell	Honda Gold Wing	10,342	91,071	Silver
38	Art Garvin	Honda Gold Wing	9,992	90,992	Bronze
39	Bill Wade	BMW R1200GS	9,864	90,720*	Silver
40	Kevin Healey	Triumph Trophy	9,569	90,348*	Silver
41	Bo Griffin	BMW R1200GSA	9,829	89,967	Bronze
42	Dave Biasotti	BMW R1150RT	10,322	89,814	Bronze
43	Jim Frens	Honda Gold Wing	11,514	89,199	Bronze
44	Vance Keeney	BMW K1200GT	9,440	89,155	Bronze
45	Terry Neale	Yamaha FJR1300	9,861	88,412	Bronze
46	Brian Roberts	Honda ST1300	9,756	88,172	Bronze
47	Jerry White	Yamaha FJR1300	8,836	87,978	Bronze
48	Terry/Lynda Lahman	Honda Gold Wing	9,474	87,341	Bronze
49	Steve Short	Honda Gold Wing	10,981	86,695	Bronze
50	Bob Elliot	BMW R1200GS	8,645	85,813	Bronze
51	David Porter	Yamaha FJR1300	9,400	84,429	Bronze
52	Jeff/Carol Fremder	BMW R1150RT	9,282	84,351*	Bronze
53	Jim Mulcahy	Yamaha FJR1300	9,546	83,969	Finisher
54	Chris Whitmore	Yamaha FJR1300	9,228	83,633	Finisher
55	Rick Neeley	Honda Gold Wing	9,533	83,481	Finisher
56	Winston Oxley	BMW R1100RS	10,700	82,957	Finisher
57	Maura Gatensby	Honda ST1300	9,436	82,629	Finisher
58	Bob Collin	BMW R1200RT	9,440	81,197	Finisher
59	Joel Rappoport	BMW R60/6	10,554	81,106	Finisher
60	David Bourdeaux	Honda Gold Wing	9,244	81,090	Finisher
61 (tie)	Jacques Titolo	Kawasaki ZX12R	9,527	80,680	Finisher
61 (tie)	Jennyfer Audet	Honda CBR1100XX	9,525	80,680	Finisher
63	Doug Webb	BMW R1200GSA	8,343	80,131	Finisher
64	Richard Buber	BMW R1150RT	11,401	79,721	Finisher
65	Bob/Sylvie Torter	BMW K1200GT	9,456	79,144	Finisher
66	Thane Silliker	Honda ST1100	10,159	78,967	Finisher
67	Glenn Pancoast	BMW R1200RT	9,237	78,945	Finisher
68	Margaret Peart	BMW R1200GS	9,502	77,272	Finisher
69	Tom Loftus	Honda ST1300	9,718	74,215*	Finisher
70	Barry Bertram	Suzuki RE5	9,948	40,860**	Finisher
DNF	David Legnosky	Honda Gold Wing	8,289	74,827	
DNF	David Nelson	Honda Gold Wing	10,418	74,073	
DNF	Alan Barbic	Yamaha FJR1300	10,702	73,369	
DNF	Charlie Clemmer	BMW R1200RT	10,612	72,432	
DNF	Tom Bisagni	Yamaha FJR1300	8,278	71,303	
DNF	Don Fitzgerald	Honda ST1300	7,936	70,839	
DNF	Larry Scalzitti	BMW R1150GS	8,432	65,281*	

DNF	Gary Jarl	BMW R1200RT	7,933	67,066
DNF	Sal Terranova	Honda ST1100	9,141	61,067*
DNF	Mike Langford	BMW K1200LT	8,326	64,168
DNF	Bob Mutchler	BMW R1150RT	9,308	60,124*
DNF	Alex Harper	Suzuki RE5	9,748	27,874* <sup>**</sup>
DNF	Kevin Smart	Honda GL1100	7,003	54,442
DNF	Derek Dickson	Yamaha FJR1300	7,836	49,634
DNF	David Hicks	Yamaha FJR1300	7,980	48,930
DNF	Bob Lyskowski	Harley FLHT	6,045	45,996
DNF	Davo Jones	Kawasaki Concours14	7,323	43,730
DNF	Kurt Dix	Kawasaki Concours	6,598	39,795
DNF	Tony Hudson	Honda ST1300	6,183	37,465
DNF	Mark Dieck	Yamaha FJR1300	6,610	36,883
DNF	John Stanforth	Honda Gold Wing	5,842	34,760
DNF	Bob Collins	Honda Gold Wing	6,853	34,055
DNF	Kent Kidwell	BMW R1200RT	4,664	32,204
DNF	Neil Ward	Kawasaki KLR650	6,395	28,207
DNF	Scott LaShier	Honda ST1300	2,750	12,103
DNF	Phil Becker	Honda ST1100	2,853	12,030
DNF	Bill Rauschenberg	BMW R1200GSA	2,777	9,421
DNF	Kendall Anderson	Moto Guzzi Norge	2,552	9,097
DNF	John Ferber	BMW R1200GSA	2,649	8,586
DNF	David Riley	Honda Gold Wing	2,425	7,604
DNF	Jim Bain	BMW K1200LT	0	0

\* Does not include points counting toward medal level deducted for wrong photo of "BAG".

\*\* Does not include points counting toward medal level deducted for changing motorcycle.

Whether in the "DNF" category or not, everyone who made it to the finish line completed a more challenging ride than 99% of other motorcyclists will ever even attempt. Those who achieved finisher status have demonstrated that they are the World's Toughest Motorcycle Riders.

Tom Austin

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