

The 2010 Iron Butt 5000 – Day -3  
Friday, August 13, 2010

### The Riders Gather in Denver

Hundreds of motorcyclists have gathered at the Marriott Tech Center in Denver, Colorado, for the Iron Butt Association's 2010 National Meet. Most of the participants will head for home on Sunday morning, but about 65 riders and a dozen or so staff will be staying on for the first ever running of the Iron Butt 5000, a new 5-day motorcycle rally with a format similar to the 11-day Iron Butt Rally (IBR). Tech inspection and check-in begins on Saturday afternoon and the rally starts on Monday morning.

### Parking Lot of the Marriott Tech Center in Denver



Photo by Steve Hobart

Except for Mike Kneebone and the handful of staff members who have put this rally together, no one really knows what to expect from this rally. Some may be assuming that it will be a de-tuned version of the Iron Butt Rally with easier bonuses and more obvious routing choices. Nothing could be further from the truth. Riders will be faced with the same kind of difficult routing choices that exist in the 11-day Iron Butt Rally. It will also become obvious that the highest-point route options are feasible only for exceptional riders, like entrant Chris Sakala, who finished 4<sup>th</sup> in the 2009 IBR and 2<sup>nd</sup> in 2005.

While the Iron Butt 5000 will provide an incredible challenge to some of the world's top riders, it will also provide a unique opportunity for some lesser-known riders to secure a slot in the 2011 Iron Butt Rally. In recent years, obtaining a slot in the Iron Butt Rally has become extremely difficult, especially for newer riders who don't receive the preferential treatment given to veterans of previous Iron Butt Rallies. The random drawing for "rookies" leaves hundreds of applicants disappointed. But this year, riders who qualify as "finishers" of the Iron Butt 5000 will have a guaranteed slot in the 2011 Iron Butt Rally. However, being designated a "finisher" won't be easy. Riders will have to demonstrate that they can average nearly 1,000 miles per day while scoring some out-of-the-way bonuses.

In addition to being a rigorous 5-day competition for top riders and a pathway to the 11-day Iron Butt Rally for others, the Iron Butt 5000 will also be a tribute to Eddie James. Almost everyone who is a part of the long-distance riding community knows who Eddie was and that his life was cut short in a motorcycle accident on December 6, 2009. For the few of you who aren't familiar with Eddie, he was one of the most accomplished rally riders and one of the best, if not the best, rallymasters of all time. I rode the first 5-day rally that Eddie and his sidekick Adam Wolkoff put on in 1999 called the Butt Lite 5000. It wasn't just good; it was great; on a par with the Iron Butt Rally. The imaginative and entertaining bonus locations were brilliantly laid out and everything ran like clockwork at the checkpoints and the finish.

In addition to his competence as a rallymaster and rider, Eddie was a damn funny guy. I remember the riders meeting at the 1999 Butt Lite 5000. Eddie solemnly looked at the group of riders and asked, "Do you know why you are here?" Most of the riders considered the question introspectively; a few mumbled something about doing their best and riding safely. Eddie was dismissive of the responses and then answered his own question on behalf of himself and co-rallymaster Adam Wolkoff: "You are here for the amusement of the rallymasters; I know you won't disappoint us."

The Iron Butt 5000 was to have been Eddie's most recent rally masterpiece. Last October, Mike Kneebone agreed that Eddie would serve as rallymaster with assistance from Adam Wolkoff. Lisa Landry and I were to provide some limited support and other Iron Butt Rally staff would handle rider check-in, tech inspection and scoring. Unfortunately, Eddie's vision of the Iron Butt 5000 hadn't been well-documented by that fateful day in December. Lisa Landry took on responsibility of pulling the rally together starting with some bits and pieces of information obtained from Eddie's fiancé Lisa Erbes and Adam Wolkoff. Major contributions were then made by several veterans of some of Eddie's previous rallies and IBR staff, including David E.B. Smith, Allen Dye, Dave McQueeney, John Harrison, and Greg Roberts.

As you will see in the coming days, the bonuses being used in this rally are truly a tribute to Eddie James.

## Rally Checkpoints

At this point, riders have no idea where they will be going on Monday morning. They know that the first checkpoint is right back where they started from here in Denver on Tuesday evening. Following a mandatory layover at the end of Leg 1, riders will be given the bonus listing for Leg 2 at 5 a.m. on Wednesday morning.

The previously published schedule indicates that riders will be leaving at 10 a.m. Mountain Daylight Time (MDT) on Monday. The final checkpoint window in Spartanburg, South Carolina was to open at 9 a.m. Eastern Daylight Time (EDT) on the following Saturday. At the end of the 2-hour checkpoint window at the finish, the riders would have had 1-hour less than a full 5 days. To provide a full 5 days without getting into penalty points for late arrival, the start time has recently been moved up to 8 a.m. on Monday and the finish will now be at 10 a.m. in Spartanburg on Saturday.

The checkpoint window for Leg 1 will open at 10 p.m. on Tuesday, which allows for 38 hours of riding. There is a 7 hour layover before the bonus list for Leg 2 is handed out at 5 a.m. on Wednesday morning. Including the time required for route planning, riders have 75 hours to get to the finish in Spartanburg before incurring penalty points for late arrival.

Not only will there be nearly twice as much time for riding on Leg 2, the bonus points available per day will escalate, just as they do in the 11-day Iron Butt Rally. Because of the point escalation, riders will be reminded that they need to be somewhat conservative on Leg 1 and arrive at the checkpoint in time to be well-rested for the start of the second leg. They will not only need to be well-rested for the ride, they will need maximum mental alertness to plan their Leg 2 route “on the clock.” Based on previous Iron Butt Rallies, many inexperienced riders will ignore this advice. In fact, based on previous rallies, many experienced riders will also ignore this advice.

## Pre-Rally Activities

Today, many IB5000 riders are honing their skills by attending some of the seminars at the National Meet. Some riders are dealing with last minute maintenance and tire changes in preparation for technical inspection tomorrow. Others are still en route to Denver.

Tomorrow and Sunday, the riders will be going through technical inspection, running the odometer check, having their insurance and registration documents checked, and receiving detailed explanations of how this year’s rally is being conducted.

Rally Staff and volunteers assisting Rallymaster Lisa Landry and Mike Kneebone in making sure the weekend’s activities run smoothly include Jim and Donna Fousek, Roger and Karen Van Santen, Susan Murphy, and Chuck and Lorraine Hickey. Dennis Bitner will be behind the video camera used during the check-in process. Dave McQueeney and Bill Shaw will be in charge of verifying that each rider using a digital camera (probably

everyone) is starting with an empty memory card, the correct date and time setting, and the proper resolution setting (640x480).

Steve Hobart will be busy this weekend trying to fill up about a billion terabytes of memory cards with photographic images, some of which I will be including in my daily reports. (Steve will have to put the camera down much of Tuesday night when he has to manage the scoring table at Checkpoint 1.) Ira Agins is still putting the finishing touches on an updated version of the software running on the official scoring computer that he will be manning at Checkpoint 1 and the finish. Ed Otto will be assisting riders with insurance issues that are likely to arise.

Dale “Warchild” Wilson will be in charge of the Tech Inspection process and the odometer check used to develop a correction factor for each motorcycle in the rally. I’ll identify the volunteers assisting Dale in tomorrow’s report.

### Upcoming Reports

I will publish a brief report tomorrow summarizing anything interesting that occurs during the first day of Tech Inspection. On Sunday, I’ll provide a summary of what transpires at the Riders Meeting and report on the activities at the evening banquet when the bonus listings are handed out. Although the detailed bonus listing won’t be published until after the end of each leg, I will provide highlights of what’s included in order to provide some idea as to the routing options the riders have to consider.

Once the rally is underway, I will periodically be reporting on what we know about how the riders are progressing. As during the last two Iron Butt Rallies, the Rallymaster and I will be keeping track of riders’ progress with the use of “call-in bonuses.” Riders will periodically be leaving voicemail on the telephone system at my office in Sacramento, California, where 24 separate telephone lines are serving a dedicated call-in number. Once on Leg 1 and twice on Leg 2, riders will be given the opportunity to earn big bonus points just by calling the number and leaving a brief message telling us where they are, where they have recently been, and the next bonus they are planning to score. As soon as they hang up, each rider’s voicemail message will be converted to a “.wav” file and attached to an e-mail automatically sent to me and the Rallymaster. The time stamp on the e-mail message will indicate exactly when the call was completed.

Tom Austin

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