

Geargrinders News

April 2024
Addendum



All Roads Lead to...Oregon

by Gary David (Car #6 driver in March 23 rally)

I wrote up the following article for our Austin Healey club's magazine and thought you'd like it. Thanks once again to you and Monte and to the rallymasters for *River Run* [the March 23 rally] which was amazing fun! Looking forward to the next one.

It was a long, long drive up from California to our new home in Gig Harbor, and the rain was relentless!

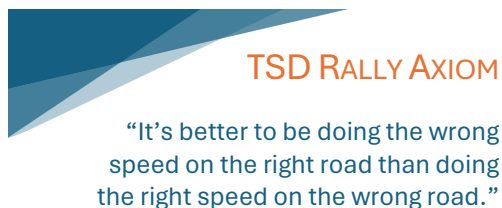
By the end of that long day, with all of our most valuable possessions bundled up in two cars, we were grateful to pull into the driveway and get out of the rain!

My lasting impression of Oregon? Wet.

Fast forward two years and I find myself snug in a small English car with no roof heading back to Oregon at 6:30 in the morning. But with a sense of excitement and adventure.

I'd picked up my co-pilot Gabe in the wee hours and packed his ever-ready tool bag into the boot (trunk).

We'd both agreed that we were not going to stop until we got to our destination: Milwaukie, Oregon. In fact, we were to meet up in the Lowe's parking lot by 10 am. Having grabbed a small snack at the home of the Golden Arches and refueled the 100 with a top-up of ethanol free gas, we were kinda ready.



There's always a nervous excitement about a new adventure, and Gabe and I had signed up for the next step on our road to Rome and the Mille Miglia.

I'd talked to Reid about the Lewis & Clark Rally he regularly runs in Oregon and had decided a little extra rally experience was in order.

I'd joined the (confusingly named) Cascade Sports Car Club and been through their 'Geargrinders' February Rally School while I sunned myself in Kauai with my Peachy Goddess! I didn't get to drive the rally course that week, but sat in on the Zoom call, giving great instructions on all the fine points of competing in Time-Speed-Distance or Regularity Rallies.

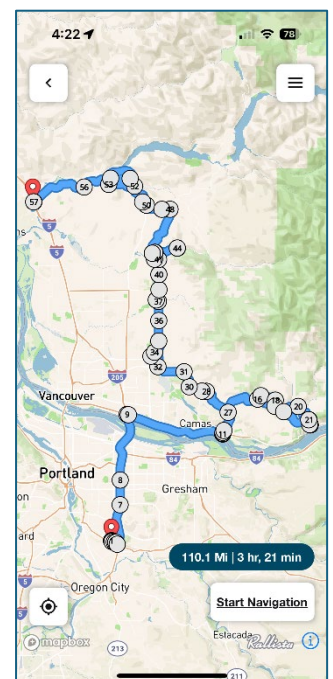
Their website is a wealth of information and useful tips for novices:
<https://www.cascadegeargrinders.org/>

So here we are, having only competed in the Tulip Rally previously, but prepared after a few runs on an improv route around Gig Harbor.

We've got the road book for the *River Run* rally giving us all the turn-by-turn numbered instructions for the route. Gabe, after a slightly queasy feeling from our last rally, was prepared with pen in hand.

I'd mapped out the exact route on my Rallista app checking directions against the road book to ensure we didn't deviate from the route.

This is our insurance policy...maybe gave us a little advantage, but we didn't miss any turns from the road book.



Rallista's route

The big challenge in the 100 is the ‘Speed’ and ‘Distance’ part of these events....

My original speedo flickered like there’s a gusty wind behind the glass – speed is pretty much a wild average between each swing of the needle.

And distance...totally unchecked but in theory only anywhere near accurate to the tenth of a mile.

Neither is going to help us figure out our turns or whether we are averaging the correct speed for each ‘virtual’ checkpoint along the route.

So our second iPhone is running an app called Rabbit Rally and connects to an accurate GPS receiver attached to the car. The device gives us accuracy down to within a meter and speed and location checked every tenth of a second giving a greatly accurate set of trip and speedometers.

We didn’t convert the road book directions into Rabbit Rally’s road book feature and just ran with two trip gauges for this first outing. The app is a free download and can also be used without a GPS receiver (just using the phone’s GPS chip) if needed. We’re using the trip meter to be prepared with turns on the road book and to average set speeds along the route, with the aim of hitting each checkpoint at the ideal time. Not early and not late – every second counts as points.



Dual trip meters within the Rabbit Rally app

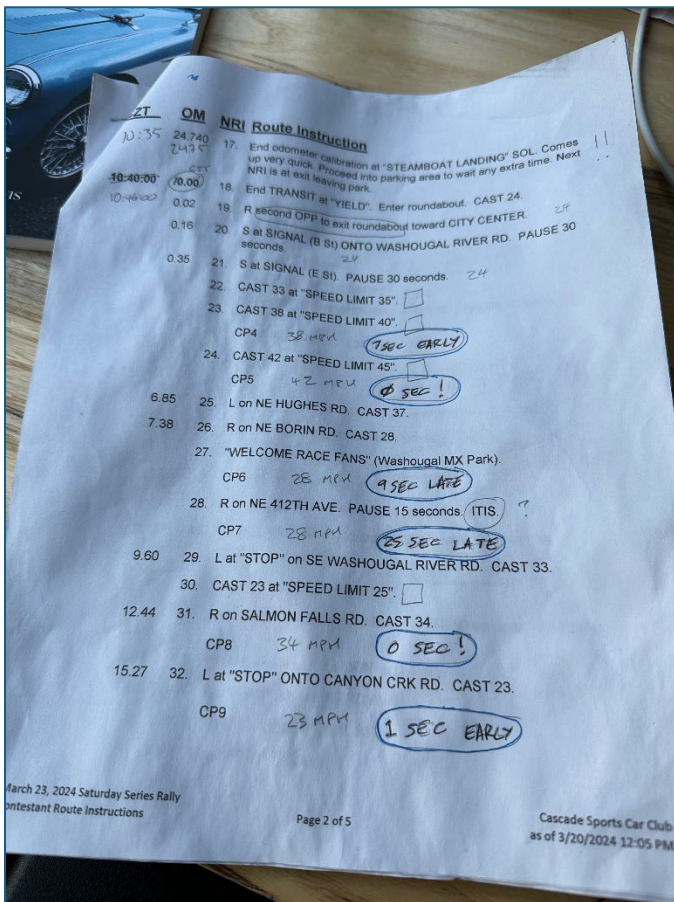
Gabe’s phone is running the Richta Competitor app which logs the phone’s GPS location against Richta’s view of the roadbook and will score our accuracy at following the route based on when we pass specific (unmarked) checkpoints along the route.

After 110 miles over three separate legs of the route, we end up in Pizza Factory in Woodland, Washington, having seen some amazing, but blurry, scenery along the rivers and waterways of Clark and Skamania counties.

We’d been early or later for a total of 271 seconds and felt pretty pleased with ourselves. Of course some of the experts in the pack had aced most of the checkpoints, with the winner only clocking up 17 seconds of penalties!

Because we’d used the GPS receiver we were put into the Equipped class and came in Second Place in class! Hold the champagne though. There was only one other car in Equipped and he was the guy who only scored 17 seconds!

Either way we felt elated and drove the 150 soggy miles back home with a sense of achievement and satisfaction. Much more ready for the Mille Miglia, we



Our scribbled road book – slightly damp!

also have some ideas for improving on our first event. Will keep you guys posted, and if anyone wants to take part in either a Geargrinder’s event or try a road rally route around Gig Harbor, let me or Gabe know.

What Is A Time-Speed-Distance Or TSD Rally— And Why Should You Compete In One?

by Mercedes Lilienthal, Crankshaft Culture Journalist and Cascade Rally Program competitor

My second [article for Forbes Cars & Bikes](#) is now live. The story dives deeply into what TSD rallying is and why people should consider trying it out. Your organization is mentioned in it, with a link back to your website. Hope you enjoy the read.

What happens when you combine a road (or off-road) trip, getting from place to place at specific times while driving a precise route, seeing beautiful places along the way, and doing it all with friends? This is a time-speed-distance, or TSD rally.

Precision Over Speed

Time-speed-distance rallies have been around for a long time and can be done with a myriad of different vehicles. It's not pricey, it doesn't require a roll cage or expensive upgrades, and the events are usually held on public roads or established trails. It's a great way to marry several things: driving, traveling, navigation and enjoying the like-minded community with those around you doing the same thing. It's a lot of fun and something everyone should try.



Ralliers must obey all street signs, even if they're in other languages. TSD rallies are held on public roads or trails.

TSD rally competitions are based on precision, not speed. Teams drive on open public roads and must follow a specific route book that's given to them by the rallymaster. They must arrive exactly on time for any given direction or checkpoint (CP), or as close as they can, to do well. Teams can take time allowances for "natural occurrences" like red lights, traffic issues and train crossings.

TSD rallies can be a few hours long and take place during the day. Local Pacific Northwest organizations like Oregon's [Cascade Sports Car Club](#), [Northwest Classic Rally](#) or [Alfa Romeo Owners of Oregon](#) have been established for many decades and have many events throughout the year. Other groups have nighttime fun, like Seattle-based [Northwest Rally Council](#) with their Friday Nighter series.

Some time-speed-distance events are endurance-based and take multiple days. They cover extremely long distances over short periods of time. For instance, the 2024 [Alcan 5000 Rally](#), now in its 40th year and hosted by the Rainier Auto Sports Club, spanned an incredible 5,000 miles over 10 days.

The 2024 Alcan 5000 Rally

That's where my husband, Andy Lilienthal, and I just came back from. We drove a 2024 INEOS Grenadier Trialmaster 4x4 from a new automaker, UK-based INEOS Automotive for the Alcan 5000 Rally. The SUV had only been sold in North America a short time before we rallied it. This was the perfect opportunity to test its mettle.

Teams traveled from Seattle, Washington throughout Canada's most remote landscapes before descending on Alaska: the last frontier. There, teams had an optional extreme rally route that took them to Coldfoot (half the way to the Arctic Ocean above the Arctic Circle) or a rest at Fairbanks' Chena Hot Springs on the competition's "day off." Guess which option we took? Fairbanks to Coldfoot, Alaska, and back to Fairbanks in one day, of course!

Teams completed daily TSD rally challenges during the Alcan 5000. However, instead of calling it quits after the TSD and joining other teams for midday lunch together, they had to drive up to 650 miles to the evening's TSD or to that night's motel for a short night's rest. Then, reset for the next morning and go again, and again and again—for 10 days straight of harrowing competition—no matter how bad the weather or road conditions get.

Different Rally Orgs, Many Rally Classifications

Teams can compete in different TSD rally classes but beware, different rally organizations have diverse classifications and regulations. We learned this the hard way after a few years of competition.

Each rally organization has different TSD rally segments or classes for teams to enter. Some have a Novice, GPS, and Equipped class whereas others have SOP (Seat Of Pants class), Unlimited, and Historic classes. Some rally groups allow all kinds of vehicles, while some only allow classics or a specific make or model.

The Seat Of Pants class, the segment I typically run in, means teams don't use rally computers or apps to help them pinpoint exact times and how late/early they're progressing throughout each checkpoint.

Depending on the rally rules, duos can use an old-fashioned simple calculator and long-form math equations (or a rally app) to help them figure out exact times they need to arrive at specific places noted in the route book before they compete.

Other classes, like Equipped or Unlimited, give teams the opportunity to use rally apps or a computer during competition, with the hopeful zero time in sight within each checkpoint.

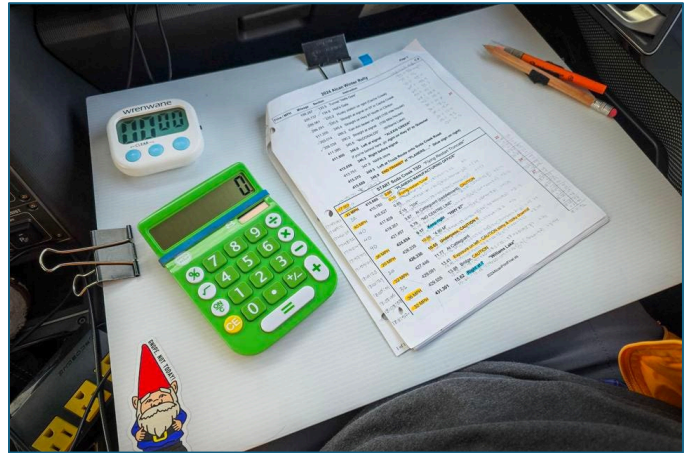
It's up to the navigator to help keep the driver on pace as teams can get off their targeted "perfect" time due to local traffic, wildlife, streetlights and more. Teams can take time allowances for these cases but need to calculate how much time they're delayed to the best of their ability to stay on "perfect" time.

Each organization has specific rules of what equipment is and isn't allowed in each class, too, and those classes vary from one organization to another. For instance, some groups allow a GPS odometer and simple calculator in the SOP, or Seat Of Pant class, whereas other groups don't. Check with your local rally organizer to make sure a specific piece of equipment is allowed before using it.

In short: Do your research and ask questions. Learn ahead of time what the differences are between classes and what rally aids, or equipment is available to use before you rally. The most important thing is—have fun! Staying on course when you're a novice is the most important thing. The ability to arrive on time at specific places will come soon enough.

A quick Google search for "TSD rallies near me" should yield local rally groups near where you live. A lot of them have Facebook groups where you can ask questions and learn how things go. YouTube is also a great resource to see how teams compete.

The biggest time-speed-distance or TSD rally takeaways are to stay on route, have fun, and the rest will come as you start playing the game. Precision rallies are an inexpensive way to get out there, get challenged, and get to know like-minded gearheads. It's certainly opened our world to a new level of fulfillment since we started TSD rallying in 2018.



For this year's Alcan 5000 Rally, I used a simple kid's calculator and long-form math equations to help me figure out exact times I needed to arrive at specific places during each TSD rally. My calculations were spot on as we won the Truck and SUV class