

Tips for TSD rally drivers - by Gary Starr

- 1) Use a 1/4" Plexiglas centerboard to hold the routes, critiques, main road determinants and any A or B box. It is imperative that at least the routes be on the dash between the driver and navigator where each can read and write on them during the rally. I actually keep everything (except the scorecard) on the centerboard so I have instant access and can see it all with my own eyes. And I make my navigator write our mileage of all mileage instructions right under the instruction's mileage so I can compare them (for factor adjustment and knowing whether to cross the timing line early or late and by how much). I also use popsicle sticks with Velcro on the back for main road determinants which work great.
- 2) Check off the route instructions yourself (not the navigator) to help you pay attention and not make mistakes (but navigator should watch to make sure the proper instruction is being worked on).
- 3) Highlight in different colors on the routes: speed changes, pauses, restarts, controls, transit zones, quoted signs.
- 4) On trap rallies circle the onto's when they become active, X them off when you lose them.
- 5) Never go past the leading edge of an intersection that you're not sure of - always make sure you slow down enough to accomplish this - stop if necessary before the intersection, not in or past it. The biggest mistake and waste of time beginners do is driving through intersections and having to back up. This will take 5 times more time to do than if you had stopped before the intersection (not to mention very dangerous).
- 6) You fill out the scorecard while navigator is setting up next leg - the navigators got enough to do.
- 7) Try to read the critique (description) of the leg to make sure you did it right for the same reasoning as the rallymaster intended before starting next leg. Precedence is set by the rallymaster - not you (and you may need this knowledge on later legs).
- 8) Double check at the outmarker that your navigator has got things setup correctly and remind your navigator during the leg when a speed change is about to be done - a smart navigator will appreciate this.
- 9) Inform your navigator what you are thinking about the course and/or traps and when you are going to turn around. Call out loud the main road and where you are going & why at every intersection, so your navigator can follow your logic (e.g. "I'm going to do a left at T to follow the main road" or "Main road is right by protection - I'm going to do the instruction Left"). This will give your navigator the chance to disagree and save you an embarrassing backup or max. - remember your a team and need to check each other - the smart driver knows this all too well!!! Call out all curve arrows (either partner) whether the curve arrow determinant is active or not [e.g. "Curve arrow right" or "Curve arrow doesn't count". This will help when you get to the intersection and see the back of a diamond shaped sign in your mirror (oh) but then you remember your partner called it out so you don't have to go back - aren't navigators great who don't keep their heads down?].
- 10) If you had a good run, buy your navigator the first drink - remember he did all the timekeeping AND checked all your course following. And always thank the R/M and workers at the end.
- 11) Always bring to every rally: a wrist watch to synchronize with WWV or to the rally master clock (exactly to the second but corrected to local hour), a full size spare, and if a winter rally: snow tires, shovel, triangle/flares, 6V lantern, tow strap, x-bar lug wrench, extra warm clothes & mittens & boots. Disconnect passenger air bag if you have an object (eg. A box, B box, or centerboard) in front of it so it won't get blown into the navigator's face should it go off (my car has a connector just inside the glove box).