

2023 Heart of Texas Daily Report – 4/25/2023

Rider meeting at 4:30AM was, um, interesting. If you happen to know something that happened or anything about the theme because your friend is riding, please keep it to yourself. The 2-day riders haven't had the opportunity to be surprised (and terrified!) yet. I kid. I kid. Maybe.

Riders scurried off to their rooms planning. We kept an open Zoom meeting for folks to ask questions. Unfortunately, the hotel's wifi is from 2004 and can't handle our video call. We had to drop back and turn off the video and audio and just have a running chat. It's working. There's much rider angst about what they will do right now. This is typical and we always empathize, but folks need to just sit back and think without over-thinking for a bit. Far easier for us to say than do ourselves, so we really do understand.

In addition to the minimum requirements for bonus submission, riders must obtain certain minimum sleep points. These points can be enhanced exponentially (literally. We're nerds, sorry) by successfully documenting a meal bonus at select restaurants. Riders must be off the motorcycle for 45 minutes and eat a sit-down meal. They must document this with a copy of their receipt showing the meal purchase. Not a tee shirt, not a slice of pie. They may purchase these items, but there better be a proper meal on that receipt as well. Let me tell you, some of these places have really good pie. But, the riders need to eat their meal before dessert, just like momma said. Now, how anyone, let alone Lew Ballard, goes to the Texan Café & Pie Company in Hutto and leaves without pie is a complete mystery to us.

We will be heading over to the staging area for riders to set up for the start shortly. We'll do final odo readings and have a final rider briefing before releasing them to the vast Texas roads to do all the things riders do. We'll come back after they've been released with some thoughts that can be shared without ruining anything for the 2-day riders.

Well, that was a couple hours ago. Since then, Nancy has received a large pile of assorted rider belongings to hold while the riders are out. We generally allow this with the caveat that it's reasonably neatly bundled and doesn't stink. If something becomes offensive, it's gone. For the first time since we've been doing this, a used tire has rolled into Nancy's room. While this would generally be frowned upon, Mike Best had tire issues and was scurrying around Bryan/College Station for a replacement. He's got one, but the shop wouldn't help him with documenting the defect in this relatively new tire, so he decided to take it with him and try to deal with himself. So we've agreed to help him with this by holding onto it for his return.

Riders were gathered adjacent to the hotel, had starting odometers read, and were lined up to begin the rally. After a brief pre-start reminder and last-minute Q&A, they were dismissed at noon. The bonus submissions have been flying in fast and furious. To alleviate rider anxiety, a "base route" was offered that if successfully obtained, would achieve finisher status. It seems that darn near 2/3 of the field is starting their rally with that. Several folks were feeling a little overwhelmed and decided to start out with the base route to get their rally going. Hoping they would have an epiphany to be a bit more aggressive in their game. Maybe they will, maybe they won't. We hope they have a good time regardless. But this is exactly why a base route was offered. We didn't want anyone to feel overwhelmed with decision making. If they need a little riding and bonus gathering under their boots, get going and a little helmet time often works wonders for uncluttering the brain.

Been a few oopsies so far. Riders are given an example photo of the object of interest. They were specifically told both in writing and verbally that they are to replicate the example photo as closely as

possible. Stand in the same place the scouter was standing, have the same background, not more, not less. This is also in the written rules that riders were reminded to read a week ago if they hadn't already and to read again if they had. They were told verbally this morning this same information. With the clarification that if they're off by 2 degrees, that's fine, but 90 degrees? No. Denied. Wanna guess how many we've denied so far? We don't mean to be cruel. It upsets us because we don't want to deny them. But if everyone else is following directions, we can't simply let it go when some folks don't.

It will be interesting to see how the next day evolves and how the riders start to separate. If you're looking at the spot and it looks like there's a pack following the same route, you can guess that is the base route. They can add to it as much as they like. Or even substitute, as long as the substitutions maintain the minimum bonus submission requirements. We are being intentionally vague about that right now because the 2-day riders deserve the opportunity to learn about the rally pack before the internet does!

Riders in the 2-day event are expected to arrive tomorrow. We won't have much interaction with them until Thursday morning when they come down for their riders' meeting. After they've departed, we'll be a little freer to share some information about the rally theme and points scheme. The 2-day Heart of Texas usually has a fairly small number of riders. This year, we've got something like 12, so we're excited to bring more folks into the HoT family. Not to be biased or anything, but long-time staff member, Jeff Konicek, will be joining us as a rider. He wanted to ride the 4-day, but between having been selected for the IBR this year and family/work/life commitments, he just couldn't pull off the days off work. We are definitely looking forward to seeing him!

As of 4PM, 51 riders having left at noon, Nancy has scored 231 rider submissions in 4 hours and dealt with more phone calls than either of us can remember. But riders are getting the hang of it out there. We might hear some grouching from time to time, but it does seem like everyone is having a good time so far.

Few pics from the start:



When has Buskell been early to anything?
Nothing that we know of. Nice job C.O.E.B.



Ken Andrews being very studious



Kerri Miller being her charming self