

# Ocean's Eleven Rallymaster's Critique

March 27, 2010

The primary objective for the Ocean's Eleven Rally was to give beginners a rally that was so much fun it would make them want to come back for more. I wanted them to find every checkpoint and get a feel for hitting the hose on time. I also wanted them to begin to develop a passion for this sport that we enjoy so much.

The secondary objective was to find the best roads in the Santa Monica Mountains and tie them together in an interesting way.

The third objective was to give the Group X (Expert) and N (Novice) Teams some challenges that were a little different and varied in difficulty level as the rally progressed. The rally addendum gave you five safe roads and told you that all checkpoints were within a mile of those roads, "as the crow flies". It also told you that you could not pass through any checkpoints twice.

**Checkpoint 1** was very straightforward and was meant to start you off with a good score and a positive feeling. This section of Dry Canyon Cold Creek gives views of beautiful natural scenes and homes. Group B Teams had to go pick up a course control on Cold Canyon to equalize the travel times from the two start locations. The Group B Teams were instructed to write the control information on their maps. The checkpoint team did not get the information to ask Group B for their course control information. So, most of them got an undeserved 100 point penalty. This has been corrected in the final scoring.

**Checkpoint 2** was meant to be a passage control because there are no safe checkpoint locations on Piuma. It was just before the loop at the lookout area and was within a mile of Malibu Canyon Road. The "heading west" added some interest because you are traveling on a road that goes from West to East. If the instruction had told you to go generally west, you would have had to go the opposite direction. However, the switchback made it a definite West direction on a generally eastbound road. It also gave me a great place to use my homemade paddle marker. You really had to figure out the placement and direction of Checkpoint 3 in order to be certain which way to go on Checkpoint 2.

**Checkpoint 3** and 5 were on the same compass bearing, one on Schueren and one on Saddle Peak, both heading East. It should not have taken very long to figure out that if you do Saddle Peak first (as Checkpoint 3), it would be very hard to get to Checkpoint 4 in time and that left you no way to get to the location on Schueren (as Checkpoint 5) without going through Checkpoint 2 a second time. So, you had to do the Schueren location first (as Checkpoint 3) and double back down Stunt Road to Checkpoint 4 on the lower section of Piuma. Then, to avoid Checkpoint 3 the second time, you had to make the left turn on Cold Canyon and use Mulholland and Stunt to get back up to Checkpoint 5. This gave you the fun of driving Stunt, the roller coaster road, in both directions.

**Checkpoint 4** was just east of the intersection of Las Virgenes and Malibu Canyon Roads. The note in the Group N handout that mentioned that Checkpoint 4 was West of Cold

Canyon misled a few people into going that way in spite of the “heading east” direction in the instructions. That was an intentional trap for group N and a number of you got it wrong.

**Checkpoint 5** was on a very scenic location on Saddle Peak. After Checkpoint 4, you had to make the left on Cold Canyon to get back to Mulholland and up Stunt to avoid going through Checkpoint 3 again. We were watching and four cars were caught coming up Schueren again and awarded 500 point penalties. Passing through Checkpoint 5 eastbound gave you no place to go except down to Tuna Canyon on the glorious curves of Saddle Peak Road.

While the Group B Teams were cruising along peacefully finding checkpoints and learning to cross them on time, the Group X Teams were going through a very difficult mental exercise to work out the positions of Checkpoints 2, 3, 4, and 5. The Group N Teams were told where the checkpoints were, but had to figure out the entire route also. It truly was three rallies in one.

**Checkpoint 6** was supposed to be at the turnout at the bottom of Tuna. However, several vans filled the parking area and forced the Checkpoint Team to move to another location. The place I picked was supposed to be very visible from a half mile away so teams could creep off the extra time. It was supposed to be within a mile of PCH, but I miscalculated. As a result of much consideration and discussion, I have decided to cancel this leg based on the fact it did not meet the rules of the rally. This affects three cars in the results in Group N. Car 9 goes to first place, Car 1 goes to second place and Car 8 goes to third place. These teams may keep their trophies and I will order new ones for Car 9.

It was interesting to see how fast some of these kids were going on the skateboards. One of them stopped at Checkpoint 6 for a while to wait until a gap opened up so they wouldn't be held up by rally cars!

You had a choice to do the Broad Beach run, see the Stars homes and get Course Control 3 before or after lunch. It didn't really matter, since a resident complained and the local police removed the Course Control sticker from the sign. A funny thing happened here. At one time in the planning process, we had rally cars going the other way down Broad Beach and had an another letter “L” sticker across the street from CC3 on another 25 MPH sign. One team actually went the wrong way down the road and got the correct letter! Since the letter on the Eastbound sign was removed, there were no penalties for missing it.

Thinking about the **Restart** at How's Market brings back memories of the excellent Tri-tip sandwich from the BBQ place there.

After Restart, the run up Encinal to **Checkpoint 7** should have been easy.

The route to **Standoff 8, 9, 10** was intended to make the Group X and N Teams a little concerned because theoretically, there could have been a checkpoint on Decker Canyon Road.

At Standoff, Group X got compass bearings for Checkpoints 9 and 10. With the time available, you should have known **Checkpoint 8** had to be “around the corner” on Encinal Canyon.

The compass bearing for **Checkpoint 9** with the clue “from the South” put it up on Little Sycamore Canyon Road.

That brought you to the biggest challenge of the rally. The compass bearings for **Checkpoint 10** crossed over four roads. You had to eliminate three of them. You had to figure out that you had already driven that section of Decker to know that was clear. Mulholland was a safe road, so that left Yerba Buena or Deer Creek. This is where the “one mile” rule from the addendum finally came into play. The point where the compass bearing crossed Yerba Buena was two miles from PCH (the nearest safe road). The point where it crossed Deer Creek was clearly within a mile, which made it the only choice.

**Checkpoint 11** was also difficult for Experts. You had to figure it out based on time. You had 30 minutes (minus 2 scoring minutes) to get to Checkpoint 11. You had 11 minutes to get to the Finish (minus 2 scoring minutes) from Checkpoint 11. The only road that you could use to get to Finish in 41 minutes was Westlake Boulevard. You could use Decker or Mulholland to get to Westlake Blvd. But the checkpoint had to be on Westlake Boulevard and was just a quarter mile North of Carlisle.

We opened the morning’s driver’s meeting with a quote from Sterling Moss (one of the world’s great racing drivers). His most famous quote is, “**It’s better to go into a curve slow and come out fast than it is to go into a curve fast and come out dead**”. We are very happy that everyone heeded that quote and completed the thousand curves of the rally without incident. We are very proud of the amazing job the workers did on this rally and will list them here:

|             |              |                |               |                 |
|-------------|--------------|----------------|---------------|-----------------|
| Ron Dunlop  | Sean Stern   | Matt Stern     | Tim Errington | Marvin Castillo |
| Greg Keller | Jeff Beasley | Jerick Beasley | Tom Alcott    | David McGaffey  |
| Hera Kim    | Tanya Ruiz   | Brian McGaffey | Lim McGaffey  |                 |

I have to give special thanks to Ron Dunlop and Sean Stern who helped me avoid many problem areas throughout the creation of this event.

We hope you enjoyed this event enough to try ITN events again and maybe even become a member of the ITN Rally Team. With the knowledge you have gained from the Ocean’s Eleven Rally you can compete and win in our next event, “**Midnight Run**”.

If you have any comments about the rally or suggestions for improvements for future rallies, please go to the **RallyRoutes.com** website and enter them in the Ocean’s Eleven Rally blog.