

Thunder Road 2021 Critique

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Leg 1

An easy leg to start out. Preferred Route utilized I15 from the Start, then a simple navigation exercise to get to CP 1 on Olive St/Sumac Rd.

Leg 2

Navigate to CC2, then use Newport Rd and Domenigoni Pkwy through Menifee and Winchester, then South on State St. Head East on Minto Rd (labelled as "Minto Way" on some signage) to approach CP 2 on Red Mountain Rd (labelled as "Oak Dr" on some signposts on course) heading away from Minto Rd. CP 2 was located about 0.5 miles East of Sage Rd.

Leg 3

Straightforward route to Benton Rd however contestants needed to note that East Benton Rd is located slightly North of the intersection of Benton Rd and De Portola Rd. CP 3 was located 1.8 miles West of De Portola Rd.

SO 4, 5, 6

Navigate Back to the intersection of Mesa Rd and De Portola Rd on the way to pick up CC 3, then SR 371 to Anza for a break.

After the restart (SO 4,5,6) you are faced with a maze in which you are initially provided little information. The Route Instructions provide Novices with road names and a directional for CPs 4, 5, and 6. However Regular and Experts are armed only with road names (Devils Ladder Road for CP 4 and 5, Pyramid Peak Road for CP6). Prior to beginning to step through the sequence it is imperative to have a strategy so as not to inadvertently run into the wrong checkpoint, as well as collect all the appropriate information. The key to successfully navigating through the mix of roads is (1) pay attention to the timing between checkpoints, and (2) be observant of visual clues along the way. To do this at least one CP needs to be 'anchored', thus a bit more information is provided at standoff and restart.

At the standoff, the exact location of CP 4 is provided for all classes (aka the 'anchor'). Novices are also given the exact location of CP 5 and CP 6, while Regulars and Experts are given only the direction for CP 5 and CP 6.

Leg 4

To successfully navigate to CP 4 after Standoff, rallyists should continue east on Burnt Valley Road to it's intersection with Hwy 371, east to Hwy 74, then head north. Regulars and Novices are instructed to report CC 4 and CC 5 at CP 4 so they collect the CCs before CP 4. Experts are instructed to report CC 4 and CC 5 to CP 5 so they collect CC

4 and recognize that there is insufficient time (7 minutes) to (safely) collect CC 5 after CP 4 and still be able to drive all of Devils Ladder Road West of Hwy 74 to find CP 5. Thus, all classes continue north on Hwy 74 past Devils Ladder Road to CC 4. Return south on Hwy 74 and collect CC 5 on Butterfly Peak Road. Continue on Butterfly Peak Road to Tool Box Spring Road and turn right. Be careful not to proceed east on Tool Box Spring Road or you may run into CP 4 in the wrong direction.

Continue until you reach Hwy 74, then proceed south on Hwy 74 to Devils Ladder Road and head east. The CP is immediately prior to Tool Box Spring Road. Novices and Regulars have been instructed to turn in CC 4 and 5 here.

Leg 5

Now it's on to CP 5. Given the location of CP 4, the only option for CP 5 is on Devils Ladder Road west of Hwy 74. The preferred route from CP 4 proceeds left on Tool Box Spring Road to its northern intersection with Hwy 74. While Novices know the exact location of CP 5, Regulars and Experts have only been provided with the northerly direction. Regulars and Experts don't know exactly where CP 6 is yet either and should realize that Pyramid Peak Road needs to be avoided at this point of the rally. It's time to conduct a search the length of Devils Ladder Road. Thus, it's south on Hwy 74 to the intersection of Devils Ladder Road, now proceeding the opposite direction (west) that you turned for CP 4. Follow your nose west and then north on Devils Ladder Road. As you approach Pyramid Peak Road you will see a timing car to your immediate right, thus confirming the location of CP 6. Continue past Pyramid Peak Road and you will shortly see CP 5 at the far North end of Devils Ladder Road. It is here that Experts should provide CC 4 and CC 5 info to the friendly Thunder Road 2021 crew.

Leg 6

Immediately after you exit CP 5, Devils Ladder Road turns into Hop Patch Spring Road. Follow this road to its intersection with Pyramid Peak Road, and turn left. Soon you will come to Devils Ladder Road again and will be face to face with a timing car immediately on the opposite side of the intersection. You can proceed in one of three ways...

1. Continue straight past the timing car, make a U turn, and approach CP 6 in the correct direction.
2. Turn left on Devils Ladder Road and repeat the loop until the timing car goes away.
3. Turn right on Devils Ladder Road.

Obviously, the correct answer is #3, thus follow Devils Ladder Road south to Hwy 74, turn north on 74, and then left onto Pyramid Peak Road. Cross the hose, check with the timing car, and you've now successfully completed the maze. Your escape route will be left on Devils Ladder Road to Hwy 74 (again), then right on Hwy 74 with an amazing vista in your future.

Leg 7

Preferred Route traverses back through Anza to Aguanga using SR 74 and SR 371. SR 79 South to Warner Springs to collect CC 6. Straightforward drive via S2 and S22 for a picturesque view of Borrego Springs (and CC 7). Return to SR 79 South to Mesa Grande Rd to find CP 7 at the intersection with the unpaved Black Canyon Rd and turn in CC 7.

Leg 8

Continue down the hill from CP 7 with careful attention to the switchbacks, then SR 76 West to S6 South and into SO 8. Handout places CP 8 on Fruitvale Rd West of Mac Tan Rd. Take Vesper Rd and Cole Grade Rd to the Westernmost end of Fruitvale Rd, head East to find CP 8 approximately 0.9 miles East of Cole Grade Rd. Use Vesper Rd to head to the Finish to avoid going through SO 8 backwards.

Tiebreaker Sequence: 5, 3, 6, 7, 2, 4, 8, 1

Thanks for coming out and running with us. We hope you had a fun time. Have a safe drive home.