

2017 Metro PCA Snowflake Rally

by Peter Schneider

This year's New York Metro Snowflake Rally celebrated its 61st consecutive year. The Snowflake is a lightly trapped/course TSD rally and is the longest running Porsche event in the nation and one of the longest running rallies in North America. The event even predates The Porsche Club of America by one year.

I first heard about the Snowflake back in the early '80s, but since it is a 2+ hour drive from New Jersey to the start of the event, it was not high on my priority list. But the more I heard about it, the greater my desire to run the rally and finally in '85, I drove out to enter my first Snowflake. Ever since then I've been hooked and have run the event religiously over the past 32 years, only missing three years.

While the event has been shorted and now ends on the eastern tip of Long Island, I still feel it is worth the trip.

This year's event was classic Snowflake; it included no less than eight Photo Clues and the famous Pause of 24-seconds at each guarded railroad crossing. The Pause at the crossings are not always used but was included this year. In the past, the Pause was at an unguarded railroad crossing, but since urban sprawl has extended past Riverhead Long Island (75 miles east of midtown Manhattan), the event had to switch to guarded crossings.

This year, my driver was Jeff Becker. Jeff began running TSD rallies in 1968 and has been competing on the Snowflake since 1973. Jeff may be better known for his success in the SCCA Pro Rally series where he was co-driver for the likes of Bruno Kreibich, John Buffum, and Paul Choiniere who together with they won eight National Pro Rally Championships driving for the factory Audi and Hyundai teams. Jeff ran several events in Europe for Opel Team Holland including the 1982 and '83 Rallye Monte Carlo World Championship events. Jeff has won the Snowflake three times in the past while driving for the current Rallymaster Richard Mooers.

I left New Jersey early in the morning to avoid fighting Mid-town New York traffic to pick up Jeff in Manhattan; we arrived about an hour early at the start to get settled in and have breakfast.

As always, once we receive a copy of the Route Instructions, we sit down to read through instructions and check to make sure that all the Route Instructions are in correct numeric order. In the past, the Rallymaster has reversed a few to keep you on your toes, while the out-of-order instructions would not get you lost, they might have you execute a speed change at the wrong mileage which would cause you to be late at the next checkpoint. We also check to see if there are any route following traps on the 2017 route instructions that had been used in the past.

I use colored markers to highlight all the speed changes, Pauses, beginning and ending locations of all Free and Transits Zones and Special Photo Clues. Also, I review all 'car zero' restart times and write down my adjusted restart time based on my car number. You cannot do well if you start in the wrong minute. I make a note on the photo pages as to what action needs to be taken once we locate the scene in the Photo Clue. A couple of years back, I failed to highlight a one-minute Pause on the instruction sheet, and we did not catch the error while running the event, which caused us to come in early at a checkpoint which added 100 points to our score.

Just prior the start of the event the Board of Metro PCA presented a check of \$12,000 to Kamp Hope. This local charity provides children impacted by a parent's cancer with a supportive camp experience with year-round activities within a community that recognizes and understands the unique and sensitive needs of each child. The Region has raised funds over the past 12 months.

If you have the patience to keep reading, I'll try to explain some of the tricks/traps that the Rallymaster used on this year's Snowflake.

Section I of the event was a Tire Warm-up Leg. This leg was designed to warm-up/expand your tires to 'running temperature' (this is left over from the old ply-belted tire days). This leg was about five miles and lets you conduct a preliminary calibration of your odometer against the Rallymaster's.

Section II was a combination of the Odometer Leg and the first TSD section. This Section had two rally timing traps. The first was an overlap trap; the route instructions had you calculate your average speed, assuming it would take you exactly 32 minutes to complete the first 34 instructions. Since route instruction #34 was a Photo Clue at 13.926 miles used to calculate your odometer factor, but it also stated to 'End Free Zone in the next half mile', the instruction was not complete until after you traveled the additional half mile. If you failed to notice this, your calculation of the average speed would have given you an average speed of 26.11 mph (incorrect) instead of 27.05 mph (correct). This seemingly small difference over 14.426 miles, which was the length of the leg, would have resulted in you arriving over one minute late at the first checkpoint, adding 100+ points to your score (the idea is to accumulate the fewest points).

The second trap in Section II was tricky Photo Clue; it was a photo of a large "STOP AHEAD" sign. You passed six "STOP AHEAD" signs before finding the exact sign that appeared in the photo. If you failed to select the correct sign, you would not have reduced your average speed to 20 MPH at the correct mileage as required by the Photo Clue and would have arrived at the first checkpoint at the wrong time. So, to do this Section correctly, you not only had to do both traps right, you also had to avoid getting lost, or failing to add your car number to the specified start time of the section (a common error for new rallyists), or making a math mistake while calculating your correct elapsed time along the route, and this was only the first scored leg of the event.

Section III contained not only a Photo Clue but three opportunities to test your knowledge of the General Instructions. The Photo Clue was very easy to find, you just had to make sure you picked the correct background shown in the Photo Clue to execute the speed change at the correct location. The leg also included several other timing traps, that 1st was a sign that included the word "Aleghany" the only sign you saw was spelled Allegheny; if you missed this difference in spelling, it cost you a 30-second timing error, the next spelling trap as a 30-second pause at a Chiropracter, but the only sign you saw was for a Chiropractor, once again if you did not notice the spelling error you would have incorrectly added 30-seconds to your arrival time at the next control. I found this spelling trap exceptionally tricking, because in the past the Rallymaster had always spelled Chiropractor correctly, and used the pause to help adjust for local traffic, but we double checked it anyway and noticed the trick!

The next test involved the correct definition of a valid road, and the General Instruction states that Dead Ends, No Outlets, and unpaved roads "do not exist." You were asked to Pause 60% of a minute (36-seconds) if you pass a Dead End, and you have to realize that since in the 'rally world' they do not exist, you cannot possibly pass one.

Section IV contained a series of "either/or" instructions. Each instruction contained two alternatives. But only one could be correctly executed to remain on-course. The third instruction in the leg was an "onto/and follow" instruction. If you failed to notice that North Street turned left at a four-way intersection, you added extra miles (and time) and arrived at the next control late.

Section V contained an easy to find Photo Clue at which you ended a Free Zone, but it was designed to draw your attention away from looking for guarded railroad crossing, and if you forget to look for them (there were two) you would have arrived at the checkpoint 48-seconds early.

The next section (Section VI) entitled "Up the Creek!" or as experienced teams on the Snowflake call it "the Red Creek Run-around." Just after passing the "Big Duck" (home of the Long Island Duck, which is the most popular commercial duck breed in the United States, which started in 1873 after a small number were imported China), you had to start looking for a Photo Clue. The trap on this leg has taken many forms over the years, but the important thing to remember is never to turn at the 1st sign for Red Creek Road, one day the Rallymaster will change this, and I will get tricked. This year you had to find a curved black-on-yellow street sign depicted in the Photo Clue and 'watch out for hunters in the next .25 miles'. While traveling the .25 miles as instructed, you drove past the 1st intersection of Red Creek Road in order to turn at the correct intersection .2 miles later. If you executed this instruction incorrectly, you cut 1.4 miles off the official route and arrived at the checkpoint early.

Due to a Nor'easter that hit the east coast the week before the event, the last Section of the rally was cut short, and you had the option of either driving down 'Dune Road' or going straight to the end of the event. Dune Road is a narrow causeway between the Atlantic Ocean and the Shinnecock Bay in "The Hamptons," which includes views of oceanfront and bayfront "cottages" of the rich and not-so-famous. Most of the houses can fetch more than \$3M each, with some priced above \$6M, and these are summer homes. One thing about Dune Road is that it is not uncommon, as a result of a storm, for the causeway to be breached and the ocean to relocate homes from Ocean Front to Bayside. This year while the road was intact, it did include large bodies of standing water, which "officially" closed the road and required the Section to be dropped, but the road was passable.

The rally ended at Joe's Garage, a local restaurant. Everyone received a copy of the calculations for the event and traps were explained with the presentation of the awards.

Winning First Expert/First Overall on the Snowflake normally requires a total error of less than 1 second per checkpoint, and I was projecting a final score of about 50 points, so I did not expect to win. In addition, the expert team of Ken Hargreaves and Hugo Brunert were running as Car #1 and had won the event five times in the past; I did not feel we were going to win.

After a short wait, during which the checkpoint official times were compared to each team's arrival time at the checkpoints, the scores were announced, and the awards were presented.

Once again the Snowflake lived up to its well-earned reputation, and in this year's event even the winners did not run the event "clean." Just like in golf, those that make the fewest mistakes take home the honors. I would like to thank all the workers that gave up the day so we could come out and play, and the Metro NY PCA Region for hosting the event for the 61st year. Hoping to see you at the 62nd Snowflake in 2018.

Downloaded from the February 2017 *Road Rally eNews*

PCA SNOWFLAKE 61 GENERAL INSTRUCTIONS 1/29/2017

Welcome and Happy New Year! Make this a safe event. Don't speed. Use snow speeds only if told to do so by rally officials at the start or via emergency signs along the route. We want to see all of you at the award-giving ceremonies this afternoon at Joe's Garage where we are finishing. Stay around for the trophies and have something to eat and drink.

Presumably, only one team will finish first today, though we could have a repeat performance of the 1963 tie. As has been our custom, we list below the winners of past Snowflakes. It's your turn to join the list today, right? Good luck to all of you. Go get 'em!

	<u>Winners and Clubs</u>	<u>Score</u>	<u>Weather</u>
1957 Snowflake I	Jerry and Doris Jankowitz PCA	80	Clear; 30 degrees all day long
1958 Snowflake II	Don and Flo Blackburn SCCA	112	Cloudy; -4 degrees; winners ran top down
1959 Snowflake III	Joe Schimmel, John Freels PCA/ GASCC	16	Drizzle; 35 degrees and warming
1960 Snowflake IV	Joe Schimmel, John Freels PCA/ GASCC	11	Rain at start, but sun later
1961 Snowflake V	King Moore, Len Johnson PCA/SCCA	23	Cloudy, blustery and 20 degrees
1962 Snowflake VI	Lou Batori, George Spagna MGCC/PCA	19	15 degrees and a howling gale wind
1963 Snowflake VII	Phil Morini, Len Johnson SCCA	11	10 degrees, with Snow starting in the afternoon sections
1964 Snowflake VIII	& Jack Conover, Larry Hough SCCA		
	Chas. Schumann, Geo. Jasberg NSCT	3	Saturday snowfall; short route
1965 Snowflake IX	Art Williams, Bob O'Donohue GASCC	103	Two-foot blizzard fell enroute
1966 Snowflake X	Art Williams, Bob O'Donohue GASCC	12	Clear, windy, cold; 8 degrees
1967 Snowflake XI	Andre and Evelyn Sigal MGCC	61	Rain all day (Bah!); 40 degrees
1968 Snowflake XII	Marty Brody, Ira Meislik PSCC	130	Gale wind blew drifting snow
1969 Snowflake XIII	Frank Maly, Marty Munoz PCA/SSCC	17	Clear, cold; 15 degrees all day
1970 Snowflake XIV	Pete Kosche, John Bain PCA/SCCA	28	Snow in morning; glare ice too
1971 Snowflake XV	Pete Kosche, Ira Meislik PCA	11	Cloudy, with hard-packed snow
1972 Snowflake XVI	Pete Kosche, Ira Meislik PCA	31	Rain and wind, 40 degrees
1973 Snowflake XVII	Dick Hohol, Mike Cirello SCCA/BMW	135	Clear with ice patches; 15 degrees
1974 Snowflake XVIII	Bob Sanderson, Paul Bengels MGCC/LISCA	411	Clear, windy and 20 degrees
1975 Snowflake XIX	Rich Schneider, Rog Bergstein LISCA/MGCC	162	Sunny and cold; 10 degrees
1976 Snowflake XX	John Schwartz, Len Karig BMW/OTC	258	Clear, nice and 18 degrees
1977 Snowflake XXI	John Schwartz, Len Karig BMW/OTC	26	Cold; Snow enroute; 17 degrees
1978 Snowflake XXII	Bob Edelman, Ira Meislik GRASS/PCA	99	Rain, wind; 40 degrees all day
1979 Snowflake XXIII	Ed and Charleen Hetkowski MGCC	195	Warm, windy, wet; 42 degrees
1980 Snowflake XXIV	Ed and Charleen Hetkowski MGCC	27	Clear, windy, chilly; 20 degrees
1981 Snowflake XXV	Bob Sanderson, Ray McCann MGCC	102	Clear, cold; 17 degrees; leftover snow
1982 Snowflake XXVI	Geo. Aspiotis, Ray Ebert SCCA/PCA	272	Arctic cold; -8 degrees; icy roads too
1983 Snowflake XXVII	Ray McCann, Roger Bergstein LISCA/SCCA	18	Warm over 40 degrees, rained all day
1984 Snowflake XXVIII	Ray McCann, Roger Bergstein LISCA/SCCA	69	Leftover snow 20 °; ice out east
1985 Snowflake XXIX	Ray McCann, Roger Bergstein LISCA/SCCA	27	Clear, pleasant; 35 degrees
1986 Snowflake XXX	Ray McCann, Roger Bergstein LISCA/SCCA	217	Warm, rainy, foggy 45 degrees
1987 Snowflake XXXI	Ray McCann, Roger Bergstein LISCA/SCCA	56	Glare ice, then rain; 35 degrees
1988 Snowflake XXXII	Andre Sigal, Bob Sanderson MGCC	19	Sunny all day long 40 degrees
1989 Snowflake XXXIII	Neil Kizner, Pete Schneider SCCA	59	Cloudy start, then sun; 45 degrees
1990 Snowflake XXXIV	Neil Kizner, Pete Schneider Metro	6	Leftover Saturday snow; 37 degrees
1991 Snowflake XXXV	Steve Slowik, Dave Svenson MGCC	55	Sunny 46 degrees; Warmest Snowflake
1992 Snowflake XXXVI	Neil Kizner, Pete Schneider MCNJ/SCCA	7	Sunny 18 degrees; No snow in sight
1993 Snowflake XXXVII	Neil Kizner, Pete Schneider SCCA	36	Sunny again; 50 degrees; Warmest ever
1994 Snowflake XXXVIII	Neil Kizner, Pete Schneider MCNJ/SCCA	10	Cloudy; 35 degrees; Leftover Snow
1995 Snowflake XXXIX	Neil Kizner, Pete Schneider MCNJ/SCCA	10	Snowless & cloudy; 33 degrees
1996 Snowflake XL	Neil Kizner, Pete Schneider MCNJ/SCCA	27	Dusting of snow at end; 30 degrees
1997 Snowflake XLI	Neil Kizner, Pete Schneider MCNJ/SCCA	13	Clear blue skis all day; 3 degrees
1998 Snowflake XLII	Ken Hargreaves, Hugo Brunert MGCC	31	Cloudy; 28 degrees; flurries
1999 Snowflake XLIII	Neil Kizner, Pete Schneider MCNJ/SCCA	31	Rain; Deep puddles; 60 degrees
2000 Snowflake XLIV	Ed Harris, Alan Nutes MCNJ	8	Leftover snow; 14 degrees
2001 Snowflake XLV	Gary Urhan, Steve Novatne	171	34 degrees; old (big) snow gone
2002 Snowflake XLVI	Steve Mauger, Steve Novatne SCCA/RVSC	28	Spring-like; sunny; 60 degrees
2003 Snowflake XLVII	Jeff Becker, Richard Mooers SCCA/MGCC	9	Sunshine all day; 40 degrees
2004 Snowflake XLVIII	Neil Chodkowski, Steve Boyle PCA	257	An Arctic 7 degrees; sunny
2005 Snowflake XLVIII	Neil Kizner, Pete Schneider MCNJ/PCA	8	30 degrees, sunny
2006 Snowflake L	Ken Hargreaves, Hugo Brunert MGCC	48	Balmly, 50 degrees; late rain
2007 Snowflake LI	Jeff Becker, Richard Mooers SCCA/PCA	208	Cloudy, 35 degrees
2008 Snowflake LII	Jeff Becker, Richard Mooers SCCA/PCA	10	Few early flurries, 38 degrees
2009 Snowflake LIII	Neil Kizner, Pete Schneider MCNJ/PCA	23	Clear, sunny; 25 degrees
2010 Snowflake LIV	Ken Hargreaves, Hugo Brunert MGCC	10	Crisp, Clear 24 degrees
2011 Snowflake LV	Ken Hargreaves, Hugo Brunert MGCC	26	Partly cloudy, 28 degrees
2012 Snowflake LVI	Fred Cochran, Pete Schneider MCNJ/PCA	11	Clear, 38 degrees
2013 Snowflake LVIII	Fred Cochran, Pete Schneider MCNJ/PCA	186	Bright Sun, 25 degrees
2014 Snowflake LVIII	Fred Cochran, Pete Schneider MCNJ/PCA	179	Sunny, 20 degrees
2015 Snowflake 60	Fred Cochran, Pete Schneider MCNJ/PCA	159	Sunny, 43 degrees
2016 Snowflake 61	Ken Hargreaves, Hugo Brunert MGCC	68	Clear, 49 degrees