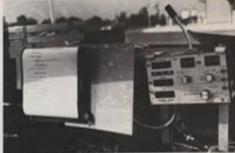
THE Hidden Persuader

A Game On Wheels Helps Fuel SCCA Growth



Checkpoints or "controls" (above) are sprinkled throughout a road rally. Penalty points are assessed for arriving early or late, and the lowest overall score wins. In advanced rallying specialized advanters are often used (right) but pencil, paper and a watch do fine for beginners—and are all that's allowed in many rallies. Attendance at the end-of-rally party (below) isn't mandatory, but most people manage to make it. (John Stenmark)





For the first four years of its existence the SOCA never held a race, yet membership grew rapidly. What was the attraction?

Porbes magazine last year ran a feature article on a popular recreational diversion enjoyed by business executives. Do you know what it is?

Membership for the SCLA is at an all-time high. Do you know a sure-fire way to attract even more eager participants? The answer to all three questions is the same—road rallying.

In the excitement and glamor of road racing and intense head-to-head competition of Soin, it's easy to overlook the fundamental attraction of joining friends for an afternoon of fun going for a drive in the country. It doesn't cost more than a tank of gas, it usually winds up with a party and you don't have to have the reflexes of a Willy T. Ribbs or the banzai determination of a Formula Fond driver. A great many SCCA members find even more attractions once they start railying. Let's face it, competition is the yardstick of life. In its advanced classes, road rally is a complicated, mind-bending game to play—which is why it attracts high-powered executives who relish challenges.

SCCA has developed detailed guidelines for setting up a road rally (see sidebar), but to whet your appetite here's a brief overview to put you in the picture—and maybe your next door neighbor too. —Ed.

by Janice & John Stenmark

A road rally is a game on wheels. If you are a game player who enjoys making spur-of-the-moment decisions, if you like challenges, if you like competition—then you will find rallying highly stimulating. It is also one of the few automotive sports in which a person can participate successfully with a minimum of skill and equipment. It is possible to win a trophy on your very first rally. And have a good time while you're at it.

There are many types of road railies. The most popular is the time-speed-distance (TSD) rally in which all cars follow the same set of instructions throughout the rally course on public roads. Contestants are given specific average speeds to maintain and are usually separated from other cars by about a minute. Along the route, check-points are encountered and penalties are assessed for earliness or lateness. The lowest score wins.

A Good Poker Hand

Although most rallies are of the TSD variety, there are also gimmick events in which the winner is determined by factors other than the ability to stay on time. For example, on a poker rally you may get a card at each checkpoint, and you will win if you manage to acquire the best poker hand. On some rallies your observation skills are tested by questions to which you may find answers along the route.

The list of rally types is practically endless, and if you check around you are almost certain to find a rally to suit your

own personality and ability.

Now that you have found a rally, you need to get your equipment together. The first and most important equipment item is-a rally partner. Rallies require a driver and a navigator. The job of the driver is to follow the course, while the navigator tries to keep the driver on time. The two of you function as a team, and it is important to find someone with whom you can communicate well. That's just as important as the navigator's ability to add numbers together and read a watch.

In addition to a rally partner, you must have a car. Any type will do, a "sports car" is not a necessity. But, your car should be in good condition and able to pass a basic safety inspection. A nice extra is a trip odometer, but this is certainly not a requirement. The only other things you will need for your first rallies are an accurate watch that reads to the nearest second and a pad and pencil. If you have a map of the area, you can bring it along, but unless you get lost you probably won't use it.

If you decide you want to continue rallying on a regular basis, you may add such additional equipment as slide rules, tables, special odometers or computers. These items are often used by experienced

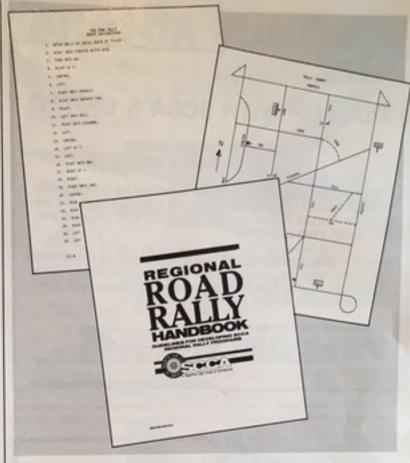
teams in advanced classes.

Get Your GIs

After you register and pass tech (safety) inspection, you will be given a set of General Instructions (GIs) for the rally. These General Instructions are extremely important and you should read them carefully. They are your guidelines for the event you are about to run, and give you vital information, such as: the length of the rally; the start time and location; details on measurement of the course; checkpoint procedure; and finally, the rules for following the course, i.e. can you use unpaved roads or not? The GIs will also tell you how signs, landmarks and road identification are presented.

Often, the General Instructions will give you an idea of "traps" you may encounter along the course. While many events are simple and straightforward, others are devious. Rallymasters often use traps in their rallies to separate the scores. There may be two or more ways to get to a checkpoint, but only one of the ways is correct. The GIs are the key to help you choose the

As you read the General Instructions, you will read some unfamiliar terms. Here are



A Digestible Handbook For Getting Started

The Regional Road Rally Handbook offered by the SCCA is a marvelous "how to" book. It is most emphatically not a deadly dull book of rules but rather a step-by-step user friendly guide for exactly how to put on a rally. After reading, there's no way a complete neophyte

can escape being transformed into a knowledgeable rallymaster. . .

The book's three authors, Stan & Shirley Wantland and Jim Meyers, unabashedly admit right up front that they are "unsavable rally junkies." Given that point of view and the fact they spent two years writing it, this 226-page single-spaced typewritten epic could easily have turned into a morass of jargon quite sufficient to overwhelm the uninitiated. But they have for the most part carefully avoided this by defining terms, using illustrations and explaining each level of the game in turn. Sprinkled throughout is humor and lightness. This is not to say it's a Dick & Jane book, there's all the beef here you could ever want. But they managed to keep the learning curve at a digestible slope

Starting out by explaining what a rally is, they then run a very simple "sample" rally with every term defined and a complete set of instructions both general and route, plus a map and explanation of the course. Then they move on to explain what "traps" are, and walk you through writing instructions for your first simple rally and your first trap rally. A whole chapter is devoted to "Loose Ends" and most important, there is a section devoted to setting up and conducting a rally classroom which teaches members how to play the game-complete with instructional aids.

There are exhaustive appendices with a glossary, tables for minutes per mile, explanation of how to perform odometer corrections, approved main road determinants, a complete set of rally instructions for an advanced rally, more details about controls, scoring, claims, adminstrative paperwork-in short, everything you ever wanted to know about rallying but were afraid someone might start to tell you too fast. All done thoroughly and thoughtfully, i.e. there is even a sample format for an insurance letter.

Road rallies are a great way to increase membership, add more competitive events to the calendar, increase social activities and energize your region. No more excuses, the Regional Road Rally Handbook is all you need to do it. To obtain your copy send \$15.95 plus a dollar for shipping and handling to Rally Handbook, SCCA, 7300 Alton Ave. Englewood, CO 80112. Or call (303) 779-6622. -Ed.

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Next: Route Instructions

At last you are ready to get out on the course. Generally you will be issued two sets of Route Instructions 30 minutes before the start of the rally. The General Instructions will tell you where and when to obtain the Route Instructions (RIs). Take advantage of this information and get your RIs on time. Once you have them in your hands, check to make sure that they are complete, that you have the right pages, numbered in order. There is nothing worse than getting halfway through the event and discovering that you are missing Page 4. This seldom happens, but it can.

Many rallyists mark the Route Instruction with colored pens for easy reference, using different colors for different actions. They

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some of the most commonly used:

CAST. This is an abbreviation which stands for Change (or Commence) Average Speed To. If you are instructed to CAST 30 at "STOP," you are to change your average speed to 30 when your car is even with a sign that has the word "STOP" on it.

CONTROL. This is usually a timing station or checkpoint along the rally route. Generally you are required to stop at controls, where you will be timed in and then given a new time out.

T. This is an intersection in the general shape of the letter "T" as approached from

ODOMETER CALIBRATION. At the beginning of a rally, you will be given the opportunity to compare the mileage on your car with the car that measured the course. This lets you know how to compensate for the difference in mileage measurements. If, for example, you have an instruction that tells you to turn left at 18.50 miles and your mileage is low compared to the car that measured the course, the left turn might come up at 18.20 miles. If you did not have a chance to check your mileage, you could get lost.

MAIN ROAD. This is perhaps the most confusing concept for beginning rallyists. There is a main road through every intersection; it is the way you would go if you did not have any route instructions. Every rallymaster will give you guidelines for following the main road. For example, if you are told that the main road goes RIGHT AT T, when you encounter a T intersection, the main road will go to the right. Often you are given a list of main road determinants and your main road is the highest applicable on

the list.

For some rallies, such as SCCA Divisionals and Nationals, there is a general set of rules which govern the event. These rules are published each year and are available to contestants. Rallymasters issue the General Instructions to supplement or modify the published rules. Always be sure to check to see if the rally you are entering uses any of these special regulations.

may highlight all speed changes and instructions that have to do with time in yellow. Landmarks that have special definitions might be marked in green. Instructions that might cause you to follow a road by name or number could be blue.

Once you have looked over the route instructions, you will be ready to begin following the route. Many rallies have a "free start," which means that you can begin your odometer calibration as soon as you wishafter receiving your instructions. Usually you are given a definite amount of time for this part of the rally, such as 40 minutes. Just be sure to leave the end of the odometer calibration period at the time you're supposed to.

Stay On Course

For your first few events, you will undoubtedly want to concentrate on course following, and this will probably take the efforts of both the driver and the navigator. All the calculations in the world will not help you if you are off course. There will be intersections where it will take both of you to decide which way to go and there will be times when you disagree. When this happens, try to choose the route that seems to be most consistent with the rules given in the General Instructions. If you are wrong, do not despair. Careful rallymasters loop their rallies so that contestants who take the wrong route will eventually arrive at the checkpoints.

The best strategy for beginning rallyists is to travel about three to five miles per hour above the CAST, to allow for the times when you slow down at intersections. Leave all time of day starts and restarts on time and observe all pauses in the instructions. Try not to worry too much about elaborate timekeeping until you feel comfortable with course following. (I came in first overall on my first rally 17 years ago using this strategy and I knew almost nothing about

rallying.-Janice)

Along the route, you will encounter controls (checkpoints). Usually, you will stop at the control's timing station, which is set up shortly past a checkpoint sign. At each control, you will be timed in. Also, you will probably be given information about the leg of the rally you have completed, such as official time and official mileage. You may be advised of adjustments to make so you can get a fresh start on the next leg. You will then proceed to an "out" marker and start the next leg at your assigned "out" time.

Brain Fade At Controls

Be very careful at controls. Sometimes you will be assigned a new CAST or given special instructions. Probably more penalty points are acquired on rallies by brain failure at checkpoints than anywhere else.

Do not under any circumstances leave a control "out" marker until you know what instruction you should be trying to execute. It is better to leave a little late knowing what you are doing than to flounder around.

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