

Friday Night Run of the Month

From the Armchair Rally Archives of Gary Starr

For those of you not familiar with an **Armchair Rally**, they came into being *back in the heyday* of road rally. They were often called a *Friday Night Run* (aka Map Rally), since it was intended as a desktop (paper) practice run to understand the concepts (and traps) of the rally's Generals for the Course Road Rally the contestant would be running the next day.

Usually they were included with the generals. They were the perfect tool to let teams prepare for the event, and I believe they still are a great way to show rallyists new to the sport the thinking needed to complete a course rally successfully or even just what a course rally is. And I am sure some of you will enjoy seeing them resurface these many years later. Who knows, maybe you'll be able to add to my collection and we can share yours through *RReNews* too!

Armchair Rallies are a self-contained rally: map, route instructions, the appropriate parts of the General's rules needed to execute the instructions (and traps) correctly, and the answers were included too. Easier rallies were one-page, yet there were harder ones that went for multiple pages. All these Armchair rallies were scanned in (some from 45 years ago) from my original paper generals, so some are a little faded. I have also added handwritten notes on some or circled important Generals sentences that will be needed.

Of course, since they all are from my set of generals I used to run the events, the harder ones will also have many things I circled or highlighted that I needed to run the real event. In most cases, however, I tried to put obvious arrows pointing to the areas in the generals you'll need to do the Armchair Rally. We started with my simplest and easiest Armchair Rally, the **Beginner's Friday Night Run**, in the Jan/Feb 2020 edition of *Road Rally eNews*. As months go by, they will gradually get harder (and even use some different concepts) until the end when I will list the hardest IMHO Armchair Rally of all – The 1978 Heart of Dixie (which was the last HOD) which *no one* does correctly without making many errors. I have 15 Armchair Rallies in all from all over the country.

For newcomers to Course rally, here is a mini-tutorial on Course (aka Trap) Rally, which these Armchair Rallies are. Course rallies are for people who want more challenge than to just stay on time as you do in a Tour rally. You must figure out where and sometimes when to do route instructions using rules stated in the event's Generals. And you must still stay on time while doing this. Someone once said a trap rally is like playing chess while riding a skateboard. Now it isn't that hard, but the analogy is there.

Here is the typical scenario: The event always has a course-following priority list to tell you how to follow the course. Usually there is also a Main Road determinant list which defines the main road at intersections. In the absence of an instruction you follow the main road. Where an instruction can be executed at an intersection on the same road as the main road is, you follow the main road and defer the instruction until later. That is called a trap, meaning you executed the instruction when you should have just followed the main road. The Rallymaster will either (a) loop the off-course cars into the control way earlier or later than the on-course cars (a different route), or (b) have either the on-course or off-course cars execute a pause or use different Casts thus producing a timing difference between the two. Either way, contestants don't enter the control at the correct time and get penalty points. Thus people say they bought (or fell for) the trap.

[Note: on these Armchair Rallies there is no looping.]