

Rallymaster Guidelines  
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## Scope

This document tries to impart some of the lessons learned on to future rallymasters. There are certainly plenty of mistakes that have been made that needn't be repeated. In short:

- A guide for new rallymasters.
- A description of the division of duties of the people involved in the rally.
- A description of the paperwork involved. Given that a "simple" rally can easily run almost 1000 pages, this is not trivial.
- Advice on course layout.

We are going to discuss only Time Speed Distance (TSD) rallies. Many other variations exist, map rallies, gimmick rallies, tulip rallies, but a comprehensive description of how to organize all of them would be impossible.

## Cast of Characters

Let's start with a list of who's going to be involved, and then get into a description of what they will be doing. Some of these positions can easily be held by the same person.

- Club Rallye Vice President
- Rallymaster
- Course Checker
- Checkpoint workers
- Registrar
- Starter
- Scoring
- School instructor

### ***Club Rallye Vice President***

The role of the Rallye VP goes beyond simply being an advisor to the rallymaster: it contains much of the administration and backroom dealings that allow these rallies to happen. The philosophical line between the two is here: after doing everything that the Rallye VP has to do, they should still be significantly in the dark about the route to be able to compete in the event. This assumes, of course, that they are not a checkpoint worker or course checker.

## General Duties

1. Schedule events at the beginning of the season.
2. Find rallymasters.
3. Attend each rally.
4. Participate in the regular club politics.
5. Maintain the folders that contain each rally's paperwork. This serves as a history of the events and a resource for future position holders.
6. House all the rally equipment (signs, clocks, etc...) and maintain it.

## Duties for an event

1. Purchase trophies
2. Gather supplies and bring them to the rally
  - a. Checkpoint signs
  - b. Clocks (and charge them)
  - c. Clipboards
  - d. Extra pens
  - e. Magnetic numbers
3. Promote event
  - a. at the monthly meetings
  - b. internet
  - c. notify other sports car clubs
  - d. notify other marque clubs
  - e. local papers
  - f. flyers at universities
  - g. flyers at auto stores
4. Check that website has current information.
5. Recruit and organize workers
6. Create Press packet
7. Contact club insurance liaison and have the rally listed as one of our events
8. Collect magnetic numbers from competitors
9. Collect checkpoint signs from crews
10. Collect clocks from crews

## ***Rallymaster***

The rallymaster has two main responsibilities:

1. Creating the course.
2. Creating the paperwork (route books, leg slips, checkpoint packets) that describe the course.

More explicitly:

1. create route
  - a. imagine potential routes with maps
  - b. first run creates route - lots of driving, explore area
  - c. second run firms up directions, adds neat stuff, and notes speed limits and possible CASs
  - d. third run checks CASs for placement, checks and revises directions
  - e. fourth run is the measurement run - enough familiarity with the course is needed so that this can be done without making any wrong turns for consistent measurement
  - f. fifth run is a check to see if everything is correct, and to see if speeds are reasonable
2. course check day before the rally to ensure all landmarks are still there
3. make reservations with the eating establishment at the finish

4. create Rally Sheet
5. see that The Generals fit with intended rules
6. create competitor packets
  - a. The Generals
  - b. Magnetic car number (some may need replacing)
  - c. Neon sticker for windshield to identify the car as rally traffic.
  - d. A copy of the abridged police letter (without checkpoint locations)
  - e. Rally Sheet
  - f. Score card
  - g. any instructional information (from the Instructor)
  - h. any emergency information (sealed envelopes with maps, cell phone numbers,...)
7. create Checkpoint crew packets
8. create Registrar packet
9. Creating **and mailing** the police letters. We usually send these to the state police and the sheriffs of each county that the route goes through.
10. handle emergencies during the rally (missing signs, missing checkpoint crews, missing roads, missing cars, missing people...)
11. track expenses
12. turn in expense report to treasurer for deposit / reimbursement

### **Rallymaster Qualifications**

In truth, anyone who **wanted** to put on a rally would probably be allowed to. In practical terms, there is a general level of familiarity with the sport that is required. If you have competed in several rallies, good. It is even better if you've been to some outside of this club. Having worked a control helps too.

There is also an issue with "traps". These will be discussed more later, but I think a good rule is that if you are putting on a rally which is fairly trappy, with on and off course loops, you should have competed in two or more SCCA National level Course (trap) rallies. The chance of disaster, disappointment, upset ralliers, and non-returns is so great with this sort of event that it must be undertaken by someone with quite a bit of experience.

### **Course Checker**

After the route is created, the course checker will run the rally with the Competitor and Administrative version of the route instructions. (This version has all the street names, mileages, and checkpoints listed.) Afterward, they will confer with rallymaster, discussing mistakes in the instructions, rule interpretations, speeds, safety issues, and difficulty level of the rally. The course checker is a quality control device, attempting to make the route instructions flawless. In order that the check has any merit, the course **must** be finalized at the time of the check, and **all** of the paperwork to be use in the rally must be provided. If the leg slips aren't done, or the course still needs an odo leg, or the restaurant hasn't been reserved yet, you might as well throw the whole thing out the window. On one rally of mine, the course checker called me, lost and confused. It turned out that on two consecutive instructions I had "Left" instead of "Right". And I had driven that course six times....

## **Checkpoint Worker**

The checkpoint crew times the cars at various parts on the course. No special knowledge is required. Generally there are teams of two people who will work multiple checkpoints during the day. As each car rolls across the line, they will note the time on the scoring log. The car parks after the checkpoint on the side of the road. The navigator of the car walks back with their score card, and someone on the crew copies their arrival time onto it, as well as assigning them an out time. The navigator also picks up a leg slip which contains the official times for the last leg.

### Duties

1. Time cars
2. Hand out leg slips
3. fill out competitor's score cards
4. return timing logs to Scoring

Crew is provided with:

1. One checkpoint packet for each checkpoint they are assigned to
  - a. Maps to the checkpoints.
    - i. One overview map that shows the checkpoint relative to the start or last checkpoint.
    - ii. One detailed map that pinpoints the exact location. This map should only have a few streets on it.
  - b. A written description of the checkpoint location. (Across from third telephone pole on left on Munson Street)
  - c. At least two pictures of each checkpoint location. Park your car exactly where you want the checkpoint workers to park theirs. If you have a helper, have one of you stand can where the checkpoint sign would be, facing in the direction that rally traffic will come. Include enough of the road in the picture that the crew will be able to recognize that part of the road when they get to it.
  - d. The Competitor version of the route instructions. The competitors will often have questions about something in there, or want to verify something, or have noticed something that needs to be passed to other teams or the rallymaster.
  - e. The Administrative version of the route instructions. Many times this information will be helpful in finding the checkpoint location, and sometimes the crews will need it for some emergency with a missing or late team.
  - f. The Generals. The fold them open to the page on time allowances, as that is where almost all questions at checkpoints will come from.
  - g. Copies of the police letters. This includes both the first page (that the competitors carry) and the second page that has the approximate times that the course will run through the various counties.
  - h. Leg slips for each leg they are scoring.
2. Checkpoint sign
3. Log, clipboard, and pens
4. A list of cell phone numbers of other Checkpoint Crews
5. A schedule of when the checkpoints are opening and closing.

6. A Clock for timing
7. A verbal, on-site tutorial on how to work the clock and assign out times.
8. A written tutorial on how to work the clock and assign out times.

Crew is not provided with, and thus might want to bring:

1. hat
2. sun glasses
3. sun screen
4. umbrella
5. camera
6. fold up chair
7. snacks
8. general purpose maps of the area
9. kickin' tunes

Requirements / Prerequisites:

1. Needs to be at registration when registration opens, as they need to leave before the competitors do to be at the checkpoints in time.

### ***Registrar***

Handles signing everyone up at the start location. The Registrar can still compete in the rally.  
Duties

1. Handles all money
2. Keeps track of who has paid
3. Keeps track of who has signed insurance waivers
4. Keeps track of who has arrived

Requirements / Prerequisites:

1. Needs to be at registration when registration opens.

Is provided with:

1. Registration sheets with list of all pre-registered entries
2. Insurance waiver form
3. Clipboard and pens
4. If necessary, cash to be used as change

### ***Starter***

The starter is present at the beginning of the odo leg. They have the official time, and make sure the cars leave on their assigned minute. Generally this position is held by someone who is on the last checkpoint crew, as they already have the official time. At some clubs, the start is “free” and

cars can leave early if they like. At the level of competition we have here, where there are always novices present, I feel that an ordered start helps a great deal.

## **Scoring**

### Duties

1. Ensure all clocks are synchronized with official time.
2. Collect timing logs from checkpoint crews.
3. Calculating / Checking final scores.

### **Not** responsible for

1. Resolving scoring conflicts or protests of any kind. That is for the Rallymaster. This is because the Scorer is insanely busy trying to get the numbers to work out. The Scorer should emphasize to anyone asking that all they do is math, and nothing else.
2. “Fixing” competitors’ score cards. Often, the cards will be incomplete, or filled out incorrectly, because of mistakes, missed checkpoints, failure to do a DIY, or any host of reasons. If the checkpoint crews are good, their logs should be sufficient to do the scoring, and the cards won’t have to be dealt with. However, if they are, the Rallymaster or the Rallye VP should assign a helper to the scorer to go around and collect the cards. Anyone with questions or blank spaces needs to take it up with the Rallymaster or Rallye VP, who will then give the fixed card to the Scorer. The reason behind this is the Scorer is already stressed out, and can barely handle dealing with one person let alone a zillion people with random questions.

### Requirements / Prerequisites:

1. Needs to be at registration when registration opens to set up the clocks.
2. Knowledge of rally scoring.
3. Knowledge of rally scoring software if a spreadsheet is being used.

## **School Instructor**

Usually this will be the rallymaster. I will be putting together an outline of topics that need to be discussed at each school.

## **Registration**

There are several things to take care of at registration. First, schedule it carefully. Minimum 1.5 hours from registration opens till first car leaves. The school always takes longer than you think, and always starts later than you think. Count on 20 to thirty minutes for the school.

We’ve been charging \$20 per team. For the year, we’re loosing money, as we have equipment that we’ve picked up. So don’t feel bad about the fee. Also, an even twenty means that there is no change to be given, and that makes things easier on the registrar.

You won’t have much time to talk to the checkpoint crews. That means that the info packets you give them have to be very good. **Very** good. Decide beforehand which people are going to be

crew one, crew two, etc. If you have a few minutes before the competitor arrive, meet with your checkpoint crews then. They will be relieved, and you may even remember to give them the checkpoint signs.

## **The Course**

### ***The Start***

The course has to start with the odo leg, naturally. You can also put in a tire warm up leg to give the event that “National” feel. Around six miles for the warm up, around ten for the odo leg. As discussed under the Starter, an orderly, on-your-minute start is the way to go.

1. It get the cars in order, and people can see who will be in front and behind them.
2. It familiarizes novices with the “leave on your minute” idea.
3. It allows competitors to recheck their clocks against the official time.
4. It allows last minute questions to be answered.
5. It is pretty exciting for first timers!

Another feature that can be very good is to have the odo leg loop around so that the start of the first timed leg is near the registration site. Let this be known, and it gives the novices confidence. “You have 30 minutes to complete the odo leg, and when you’re done, you should be right back here.” Also, the rallymaster can stick around. Often people don’t realize the questions they have until the start actually working the route. This gives them a chance to ask last minute questions.

### ***The Finish***

The route book always contains instructions for the complete rally, that is, the course all the way to the restaurant at the end. One method is having the route instructions lead out to la-la land to psych out the competitors, with the intent of having a checkpoint several instructions from the end. At this checkpoint, the leg critique slip says, “Ah ha! The rally is over! Proceed to the restaurant at ...” The problem here is the possibility that a team will get lost along the way, and try to head to the end of the rally to meet up with the rest of the field.

The finish location of the rally is never a secret. At a minimum, the town that the finish is located in will be published in advance. Anyone that asks should be given the exact finish location. People need to plan their day, their rides home, car retrieval if a team arrived in two cars. Also we’ve had spouses that couldn’t compete, but wanted to join in for the dinner, and all sorts of variations. Even though the route is secret, the finish isn’t.

## ***Checkpoints***

### **Location on the road**

The checkpoint locations are generally chosen with two criteria in mind: safety and surprise. On safety, there should be plenty of room for the crews to pull **completely** off the road. This is both a safety issue, and it prevents being hassled by the Man. Also, there needs to be room for cars to pull off behind the crew car. Keep in mind that whatever your interval is between in-time and

out-time, you could potentially have that many cars there. For example, if you are using five minute intervals, you could have six cars lined up (the five waiting to leave, plus the crew car) with another coming in!

The surprise factor is about how much warning the team has that the checkpoint is coming up. For example, at one of our rallies, the checkpoint was just over the crest of a hill. The CAS was 17 mph, so the cars were traveling very slowly. The hill was steep enough that you couldn't see the people standing at the checkpoint till you were about forty feet away from it. This gave the competitors only a few seconds warning. At one of the National rallies I attended, we came out into one section that was CAS 10, and the road was a long straight, down hill. We could see the checkpoint at the bottom of the hill, about half a mile away. That gave us three minutes to prepare!

Don't try to make all your checkpoints extremely surprising. Both types are fun. And surprising checkpoints need to have low assigned speeds to be safe.

### **Scheduling and Locating**

Typically, mainly for logistic reasons, we have been running events with six manned checkpoints. Using three crews, this gives each crew enough time to get to their second location even as the field spreads out. This puts crew one working 1 and 4, crew two working 2 and 5, and crew three working 3 and 6. We also throw in a Do It Yourself (DIY) checkpoint somewhere in the middle.

I believe that the DIY leg is critical to the program, especially with many novice competitors. It would be easy enough to *really* ignore all the math and timing behind the concept of TSD rallying if all the checkpoints were manned controls. This forces the team to stop for at least a couple minutes and at least attempt to understand how this scoring is really done.

Another thing to consider is "field stretch". This is when a couple people get late at each checkpoint. Let's imagine ten cars start the rally. Car 1 aces it and comes in exactly on time to every control. Car 10 uses a 4 minute time allowance at each control. They are going to be about half an hour late to the last control! And the reality of the situation is that I would be ecstatic if they were only 4 minutes late... you'll have cars 10, 20, 50 minutes late!

This is why you can't have just two checkpoint crews and have them alternate checkpoints. You almost always have two controls open at the same time. Cell phones are the best thing to ever happen to organizing problems like this. Each checkpoint crew should have a cell phone, and throughout the day should keep in touch with the other crews. You need to know from the previous checkpoint if there are cars that have suddenly gone missing. If a car that was thought lost shows up as you are packing up to leave, you need to let the next checkpoint know. If there are mistakes in the route, you need to call the rallymaster. It just solves so many problems. Especially if the first car is supposed to arrive at 1:30, and it's now 1:50, and you haven't seen any cars yet!

The rallymaster should never work the last checkpoint. The workers at the last checkpoint are going to be the very last people to get to the restaurant. At that time, nearly every person in the

room will want to ask you a question about scoring or route mistakes, or will want to tell you a story. The rallymaster is going to have to arbitrate these, and you're probably hungry too. Get to the finish as soon as possible so that you can take each team on one at a time.

### **Speed Past the Checkpoint**

Ultimately, rally competition is a science of measuring distance, not time. Time is just a side effect. Imagine if the CAS is 30, and a car had traveled an extra half mile; they will be a minute late to the checkpoint. At CAS 15, they would be two minutes late for the same amount of mileage error. These errors don't carry forward: if you change the CAS to 30 just before the checkpoint, the team in example two would still be two minutes late. The note here is that by having some low speed sections, you make things more difficult.

At the checkpoint itself, naturally you are concerned with the safety of the crew, the team, other cars coming from the other direction, and other rally cars pulled over on the side. All of this leads toward having low CASs at the checkpoints. However, you don't want to simply make all the checkpoints CAS 20, the field will quickly learn to anticipate where the checkpoints are located. So make sure you have some low CAS sections that **don't** have a checkpoint. On a long, level, straight road, CASs in the 40s at a checkpoint would be possible.

### **Speeds on the Course**

Choosing the CASs on the route is always tricky, especially when you consider that this club is primarily comprised of autocrossers who don't mind at all coming near the cornering limits of their vehicle. And then you think, "Well, most people go 5 to 10 over the speed limit during their daily driving anyway..." Yeah, but their speedometers aren't accurate. Drive around with a rally computer in your car long enough and you'll realize that almost all speedometers read about 5 MPH higher than the actual speed once you get to 50 or 60. So you just can't have CASs above the speed limits at the high end. It would also open up a **huge** legal mess. I have heard stories of other rallies where a bunch of contestants were pulled over by the Man after complaints were made by the locals. The truth of the matter is that they were making up time and were speeding. But a dozen team all claiming that they were doing 32 in a thirty five, with the paperwork to back it up, got them off the hook.

Now at lower speeds, you will sometimes have CASs over the speed limit. For instance, CAS 32 through a town that's mostly 35 MPH, except for the two block stretch in front of town hall. Let the competitors know that they are expected to obey the speed limits in situations like this, and that there will be enough distance before the next checkpoint to make up the lost time.

Be careful of the signs and landmarks you use at any CASs over 40. Remember, you took your sweet time exploring the course, the competitors will be barreling along at 48 miles an hour, and won't see that postcard size sign with "Welcome to Margaritaville" underneath the bush on the left side of the road. Yeah, it's there, and so that's legal. Still, it's poor form. Keep in mind that this is not a competition between you and the competitors. The competition is only between the competitors.

## The Paperwork

Let's say each contestant packet has 2 sets of instructions, 10 pages each, the Generals, 8 pages, the Rally Sheet, the police letter, score card, instructional information from the school, and emergency information... 35 pages perhaps. And you prepare for 30 teams... that's over 1000 pages. Best to get the route instructions taken care of at Kinko's. It will cost \$40, but it will save you about 4 hours of copying, collating, and stapling.

### **The Generals**

The Generals are the official rules that govern the running of the rally. It contains all the definitions, procedures, and instructions for the competitors. We do this a little differently than most clubs. Generals for most events will include *everything* about the event, including the schedule, the start location, the prizes, in addition to the definitions and everything else. Our Generals are generic and designed to be reused without modification. The specifics go onto the Rally Sheet. This way, the competitors can become accustomed to the rules. Since we don't run trap rallies, they don't have to worry that somewhere 24 paragraphs into the Generals we've changed an "optional" to a "required" or something silly like that. I feel traps based on sneaking stuff into the Generals is just in poor taste. It's a guarantee that someone will be unhappy at the end of the day.

In addition, by not modifying the Generals we protect against editing mistakes. That way some article that was put in for one rally doesn't accidentally get carried into the next rally's Generals, where it is inappropriate.

### **The Rally Sheet**

The rally sheet contains the particulars of this rally. Items that need to be included are:

1. The date of the event.
2. Time that registration opens and closes
3. The approximate length of the rally. Since the sheet will be made up before the course is finalized, the exact measurement will probably not be known. Usually I just round to the nearest 20 and put "about".
4. The entry fee.
5. How many cars are allowed to enter.
6. The measuring method. This should include:
  - a. The type of vehicle
  - b. Where the measurement was taken from. Front left wheel, rear left wheel...
  - c. The approximate temperature and the weather.
  - d. Whether the measurements were rounded or truncated, and at what decimal place.
7. The Main Road Determinants.
8. The Callback mileage.
9. The classes that will be awarded trophies.
10. The start and finish location.
11. Contact information, email, phone.
12. An "Unofficial Description" that describes the nature of the event. Are dirt roads allowed? Is it brisk? Is it complicated, or easy? Busy or simple?

Remember that the Rally Sheet is official paperwork for the event, as it has the MRDs and start times on it. So everything has to be kept up to date and correct.

## ***Route Book***

It is a far, far better thing to be re-checking the course than to be designing the route book. Trust me, no one will appreciate anything fancy in the route book: their rally stress is too high. Here are some rules for route books.

1. From the top of the page to the first instruction on the page should measure 1.2 inches minimum. The reasoning behind this is simple: a standard clipboard will clamp down at 1.16 inches. The nice looking solution to this is to have the name of the rally printed in huge letters at the top of each page. This way the page is still filled, and the annoyance of repositioning the route book is eliminated.
2. Eighteen instructions per page works nicely. Naturally it will be less if one of these has special instructions (for a DIY or break) and wraps the text onto two or more lines.
3. Three columns.
  - a. Instruction number. Arial 24 point.
  - b. Official mileage, if given. Arial 18 point.
  - c. Instruction. Arial 16 point.
4. The pages should be numbered. Top right for the number.
5. Plan on the standard top left for the staple. This will be handy when you take everything to Kinko's and top left is your only choice.

## ***Score Card***

A good score card is a work of art and an evolution of the study of user interface. If it is done correctly, the score card will fulfill several objectives:

1. Most important, it be easy for the checkpoint workers to fill out.
2. It should allow easy computation of the score.

At this time I would like to absolve you from all duties involving score card design. We have one that works. Unless your event has something extremely unusual about the things it needs recorded at the checkpoints, you will use what we've got. There are so many score cards that are bad (and mine started out that way) that we don't need to add to the pile.

We print score cards on the heaviest paper that we can fit into the printer.

## ***The Police Letter***

The police letter has to be sent out. Doing this is our way of saying to the community, "Hey, we've got nothing to hide here. We're not racing on your roads." Send one to the state troopers, and one to the sheriffs of each of the counties that you pass through. We do a two page police letter, where the second page has the a list of roads where checkpoints are located, generally organized by county. Also include a rough schedule of when we will be in those counties. The first page is the one that the competitors will carry with them, which explains that a rally is a precision event, not a speed event, and that competitors are penalized for arriving early.

## The Ceremony

This has to do with the end of the rally, the restaurant. Here are a few things to remember.

### **Reservations**

Get reservations. Make them as early as possible. Some key things to do here are:

1. Let them know that you will be requesting separate checks, even though it is a huge party. They will likely tell you that will add a 15% or 18% gratuity to each bill, and that's fine.
2. Tell them that it is an awards ceremony. Some places are very concerned with turnover and getting new people in those seats.
3. See if they have a separate room, and find out if the music can be turned down, at least for a few minutes.
4. When scheduling the start time of the reservation, **really** think about how much field stretch you are going to have and how that will affect the arrival time of the teams. Sure, they should have gotten there at 5:30 if they stayed at CAS. Now it's 6:15 and the first team just made it to the last checkpoint.... Be sure you have the phone number of the place with you so you can call if things get out of hand.

### **Scoring**

The worst part about scoring is all the missing information. With novice crews and novice teams, things get put in the wrong place, don't get written down in the logs, misplaced, just all sorts of crazy stuff. Each team should compute their own score. A fair policy could also be that teams that leave before scoring is completed, and leave an incomplete scorecard behind, don't get put into trophy consideration. All too likely the reason their scorecard is not finished is because they have some unresolved issue, a missing time or something. With them gone, that can be nearly unfixable.

Whenever a rally is planned, someone has the novel idea that they will do part of the scoring midway through the rally. The reason that the idea is novel is that every time, it doesn't work. The biggest part of scoring is **still** the missing information. Only now it's even worse than at the end, because you can't ask questions of the checkpoint crews or the teams. Mid-day scoring takes experienced checkpoint crews working familiar format logs and scorecards, and it really helps if the teams are mostly on time without any crazy rescheduling.

### **Arbitration**

First a note on arbitration that's not really rally related: the restaurant people. If they have issues, like continually asking you when you'll be done, or about the bill, or anything, assign one of the teams to be the liaison. Find one of the teams that got there early, as all there scoring will be done already. Tell that person to go introduce themselves to the restaurant manager or whatever, with the message that everything will go more quickly if they don't bother the already busy rallymaster. At this stage, almost anything that the manager has questions about the rallymaster probably doesn't care about, given the stress level. Let the liaison know that they have decision making power.

One thing that we are pretty lenient about is bought times. If someone bought 4 minutes at a checkpoint, instead of 3.5 or 4.5, well, ok. If they were only supposed to be able to buy 29.5 minutes for the entire rally and they bought 65, well, ok. As long as they made it to the end. The people doing this are generally not in trophy contention anyway.

There are **always** going to be teams that say that there were mistakes in the route. Or in the generals. Or that road didn't exist. Or that it should have. Or whatever. Most of this is usually settled by, "Well, 20 other teams saw that road." A suggestion that was made to me recently that we should adopt is that if someone really has a complaint, they have to write down two things, on paper, and hand that to the rallymaster:

1. What they believe happened
2. A proposed solution that would fix the problem to their satisfaction.

The main point of this is just that writing it down will calm them down a bit and give the rallymaster time to think. We don't go in for anything as formal as a claims committee, it's usually either a dictatorship, or a quick conference with another knowledgeable rallier.