

Midnight TSD Rally #2

I have always been interested in Rallying, having followed WRC and any other shows on Speed for many years. Last year found information on AutoCross through VMSC and took their Driving Training in July 2005. At about the same time found the IRC site and information on the Novice TSD series. Due to other commitments we were unable to attend the Novice training, and then became busy with AutoX in August and September.

Still followed along though. My daughter, Alyse (16) was also interested. Midnight was coming on a free weekend, so looked into entering. It was suggested on a local car enthusiast forum that for this rally gravel tires and auxiliary lighting were almost a must. Thankfully Paul gave a set of used gravel tires and rims free of charge, and I was able to purchase a set of Hella's.

We downloaded information on TSD rally from the RallyBC site and studying what we could. Installed the auxiliary lights, and of course did not work.... After a few hours testing all, the connector installed by Hella was loose. Replaced all connections and all was well (note to self: when testing auxiliary lighting leave car running to keep battery charged). Went to mount the rims. Had special rims on the car, the lug nuts would not tighten down far enough (good thing I did not have a flat over the summer!). Next evening to two outlets to get 16 nuts. Get home and start mounting (of course it is pouring rain) and find only have 15 nuts. Nuts. Steal one from one of the other vehicles. Almost ready and it is the Thursday before Midnight. I have all of Saturday morning to get ready.

Spend all of Saturday morning getting ready: empty car, try to secure everything we need, get food and drink for the night. Manage to be ready on time and show up for tech on time. Meet with the other participants, tech inspector gives us a few pointers and we are ready to go. Everybody is very helpful and we get some very good pointers.

Drivers meeting and novice drivers meeting go as expected. We are told that the speeds were too slow on the first route notes and have been quickened up a bit to make it more interesting. There is rain and fog, but no snow. It will be fun and challenging. Have we done right in picking a night and gravel rally for our first attempt? Our goal tonight is to first finish without breaking, second finish without getting lost, and third have a respectable finish.

We complete the odo section and find our odo out by approximately 10%, and also very hard to read. Adjust all figures by 1.08 (which ends up a bit short) and get ready for our start (car 12). We were advised earlier not to worry too much about time calculations on our first attempt, worry more about the mileage and keeping on course. Good advice. The first reg went without too much drama. We hit the first hairpin left no problem and begin our climb up the hill. Look in the mirror and another participant is coming up fast. Are we going too slow? Anyhow, move over and let him go, we will keep to our calculations. At the end of the reg it looks like we are slow compared to the watch. The car that passed us was Car 10 ... they had missed a turn.

Transit to next reg. Dusk is coming down. Navigator is happy that some one stressed to bring a roll of toilet paper. She continues calculating out the mileage for the next and following reg while I wander around taking photos.

Head out on reg 2. Dark sits in and turn on auxiliary lighting. Can see the fog about 3-5 feet off the road very clearly and get a good clear view of the road if it is heading up hill. Navigator very calmly says "You are going to



adjust those at the next transit, right?" I guess so; turn them off and drive with regular lighting. Another reg without getting lost. Only surprise is a keep left that has a watch for traffic from right. As we pass we get flashed with lights. We get use to these checkpoints.

Align auxiliary lighting and continue through next reg. Navigator stresses exposure right. Hasn't said much about all the previous exposures left. So far so good, three regs and no real problems ... except, as we are doing reg 3 I am thinking, if the odo is out by 10%, shouldn't the speedo be out by 10% too? Pick up average speed for rest of rally.

Fill with gas and food and head out for reg 4. First instruction is keep left followed by acute right. It is actually a wye intersection, why would they have go past the proper entrance and make an acute right. Learn important lesson: follow route notes, do not try and 2nd guess rally master. Now navigator has to recalculate on the fly. But I get to drive fast! Maybe too fast? We come down a dip to a bridge and bottom hard on the front end and suspension. Watch the oil gauge closely. Seemed to not have broken anything.

Car 12- Jay Young & Alyse Young



During next transit we approach a sweeping left hander too fast, but manage to keep on the road. Navigator has noted that next stop has toilet. We find 'toilet' and navigator decides to wait. Ten minutes later, navigator decides to risk it and uses 'toilet'.

We start reg 5 and manage to get all the turns pretty good. I am having trouble reading odo and have to get out a flash light to read (very difficult while trying to drive in the dark). Come around a bend and large rock in center of road that we straddle. Navigator felt that one through the floor board; watch gas gauge intently for next km. Finish reg and proceed to transit and start of last reg, a long one.

Start reg 6 and keep on route fairly well. Up to this point route book has been reasonably detailed, allowing us to confirm that we are on route. Plus, the checkpoints become reassuring as well. On reg 6, there is now longer travel between instructions. We come up on a five way intersection that says straight through (inst 229) followed by keep left (inst 230) at about .5km followed by SOL 3km later. Straight through: if you sliding to left it is that road, sliding to right the other road. We stay to right side of straight through and cross a bridge and a cross a bridge. I note this to navigator, she says no bridges. We doubt ourselves and turn around. Promptly go way off course (by about 3-4 minutes), figure we must have been going the right way and get back on course. After instruction 233 we feel more confident, but also that we are now behind as we do not pass any check points. End up missing the last check point as we missed a keep left as we pass the workers. Fortunately, our mistake was at the end and did not cost us a position on the final tally. We learned: follow the route book.

Made it back to the restaurant and had a good meal. Good talk, and reasonable pleased with our results: 10th overall.

We had great fun, didn't break anything, and didn't get very lost, so I think we achieved our objective. We will be back for the novice series in 2006.

Also, we now have a rally odo and will have new gravel tires Watch out.

Jay Young
Driver- Car 12

(Final results of this event are available on page 2)