

Just about anybody interested in driving a car—or in riding in one at some level of consciousness!—has the basic tools needed for rallying. In fact the earliest forms of automotive competition were actually rallies: a dash from London to Brighton against the clock, shortest time wins.

That's still the formula for the World Rally Championship and for SCCA ProRally competition in the U.S. But if you modify the rules just a little, you have the TSD rally familiar to most sports-car fans: Just set an average speed from London to Brighton, and let the one who comes closest to it—not too early and not too late—be the winner. TSD stands for Time/Speed/Distance, of course, and the simple math is the kind we use in everyday driving. Let's see, it's sixty miles to Brighton, and we're going forty miles an hour. . . so we should be there in an hour and a half.

If it's that simple, how did rallying get such a fiendish reputation? Why can a single rally lead you from the starting line to divorce court? How can a game that's supposed to be fun for two or more people in a car become

the kind of disagreeable frustrating confrontation characterized by language we can't use in this publication?

#### **Blame the rallymaster!**

There are still straightforward events called touring rallies that have as their main feature the underlying principle that nobody gets lost. A touring rally usually takes you through interesting scenery over challenging roads, and rallyists can throw the clock in the back seat and simply enjoy the drive. The anal-retentives among us will calculate our proper time

at every point along the way, of course; there is a certain satisfaction in rolling into Brighton within two seconds of when we calculate we should be there!

But maybe that was too easy for some rallymasters. Somewhere along the winding way, TSD rallies became word games, semantics puzzles, algebra lessons—the kind of game enjoyed by people who work the Sunday New York Times crossword puzzle with a ball-point pen. If you know the answer to, "When is a stop not a stop?"—or at least if you can figure it out!—then you'll enjoy course-following and trap rallies. These are what people mean when they swear they'll never go on another rally.

The course-following rally, the backbone of SCCA

rallying and most local rally clubs, is actually the most difficult kind of TSD rally because it requires that you decide which way to go without giving you specific directions at most intersections; you apply a descending list of priorities usually called the Main Road Rules to figure out which is the proper route. It is easy to become confused; many a rallyist has wandered so far off course that it is impossible to continue. If the rallymaster fails to provide emergency instructions, these people usually go home—and never come back to another rally.

It takes some time to fully understand the concept of the Main Road Rules, and rallymasters deliberately seek out intersections that will challenge even those who can recite the Main Road Rules by heart. But the most important "trappy" element of these priorities is the principle of no redundancy: that is, if your next written route instruction says "Left," and you come to an intersection where the Main Road Rules turn you left anyway, then you're still looking for the place to apply that "Left" instruction! Here's a promise: Once you understand this principle of no redundancy, you will move to the highest plateau of rally expertise. (Sometimes, however, the rallymaster just wants to make sure you follow the proper route. In that case, a redundant instruction is allowed—but it must be indicated in the instruction, either by assigning an exact mileage to the instruction or by identifying it as a redundant instruction.)

Want an example? Suppose your next written route instruction is "Left" and you come to a T intersection—and the Main Road Rules, like those in the CCA General Instructions, include a priority that says Left when no other priority applies. If no higher priority could be applied, of course you would turn left by the Main Road Rule—and you'd still be looking for an intersection where you could apply your next written instruction. But suppose a higher priority could be applied to that intersection (such priorities include concepts such as Onto and Protection which we will not cover just yet, but assume one of them would govern this intersection). That priority would turn you right—but the written route instruction "outranks" it, so you turn left instead and check off the written route instruction. You have "used up" the written route instruction—usually abbreviated RI—to countermand the automatic Main Road Rule.

This sort of confusion makes people think of course-following rallies as "trap" rallies—but truly ingenious trap rallies have more to do with clever wordplay and problem-solving than following a difficult route. Often there are traps based on figuring out time and speed. And while there is no room this month for a proper discussion of traps, here is an easy one:

Assume you have been assigned an average speed of 50 miles an hour. You have the instructions:

Mile 1: CAST [change your average speed] up 20%

Mile 6: CAST down 20%

Okay, raise your hands: How many of you drove five miles at 60 and then lowered your speed back to 50? Yes, Ferris? That's right; you should have lowered it to 48 mph! A simple trap, but you'd be surprised how many experts fall for this sort of thing.

What's that? You still think it should be 50? Can we interest you in a nice touring rally instead?

*(The Winterfest TSD rally is a touring rally. kk)*

# So You Want To Go On A Rally

—after the psychiatric  
examination!

By Russ Kraushaar