

TSD Rallying

Many people ask us various variations of the following questions:

- What is a TSD rally?
- Rallying is all about speeding, correct?
- Rally means driving as fast as you can?
- How are penalties calculated?
- Who is the winner - Highest or Lowest Penalty?

Motor sport by and large is all about speed but not always. The TSD format of rallying is very popular and can be extremely competitive as well. And what's more TSD rallying does not involve mad dash at insane speeds on crazy surfaces.

First what is TSD? This stands for Time Speed and Distance. Given any two you can calculate the third by using one of the following formula:

Time = Distance/Speed

Distance = Speed/Time

Speed = Distance/Time

In a typical TSD rally you are given Distance in form of a "Road Book" marking the route you have to follow. And Speed to be observed are given in form of a "Speed Chart", which describes speeds to be observed in various distance sections. Given these two you can calculate the time it should ideally take you to be at a given distance. (formula #1 above)

Objective of the TSD rally is always to be at the correct distance at correct ideal time. However it is not always possible and the difference between our ideal time and actual is converted to penalties. So if you are smart your penalties should be lowest.

Read the above again and understand fully before proceeding further ;-)

In practise it means that any time we check your time at a specific point, of known distance from start, we know what your "Ideal" time at that point should have been and as we take note down the actual time you have taken we know what "Your" time has been. The difference between the two is your penalties. If you were faster (arrived earlier) then your penalties are doubled. So it pays to be slower than faster.

Also once we have checked your time at a control and noted it in your "Time Card" all previous gains or losses are frozen and a new stage(s) begins. You can not now go faster to cover up for your slowness in the previous section (and conversely slower if you were fast).

A stage or section in TSD rally therefore is the stretch between two TC's and you are competing in a stage only against the "Ideal Time" of that Stage.

The basics of time speed & distance rallying.

- TSD rallies are run on public roads, in normal cars, at speeds that are at or below the legal limit for that road section of road.
- Some of the roads may be dirt or gravel back roads, but are chosen carefully such that they will NOT break your car.
- TSD rallying is NOT a race. Racing on public roads is **ILLEGAL** and **UNSAFE** without proper precautions & preparations.
- The rallying you may have seen on television (performance rallying) is on roads closed to the public, and they are racing against the clock in very fast, very specialised cars with roll-cages & special seat belts and experienced drivers. As in all types of rallies cars go off on their own at a fixed interval of usually one minute. They don't do that in races but we do this in rallies.

STAYING ON TIME

If it's not a race, what is TSD rallying?

You will be told (in a route book) exactly where to go, and at what AVERAGE speed you should travel. If you are able to go the AVERAGE speed between each pair of instructions you are ON TIME, and that is the object. If you are not arriving at each instruction on time, you must be either early or late, and you receive a penalty score. The penalty is based on the difference between your actual travel time and the time it should have taken you. The team with the fewest total penalties wins (like golf, low score wins). A perfect rally means a score of ZERO (you were always exactly on time).

It's pretty easy to maintain an average speed of 50 kmph or lower on a long straight highway, or most other paved roads. It's more difficult to do it on back roads, which is where we usually like to hold these events. This is one complication to the simple task of staying on time. Another complication is that the organisers must determine if you are on time or not. They do this by finding volunteers to sit at locations called checkpoints on the route that are NOT in your route book - they are hidden! When you find a check point they record your

arrival time on paper (and give you a copy of that time). They might also tell you when you will depart their checkpoint and continue on until you find the next checkpoint. So, you must always try to be on time since you never know where the checkpoints will be!

Important: You cannot make up time for being late at previous checkpoints. When you leave each checkpoint you are starting from scratch and previous "sins" cannot be corrected or counter-acted by being early on later sections. If you try to catch-up for being late, you will be early at the next checkpoint, so don't do it; it only gets you penalties! Finally, to make matters worse, you are timed to the nearest minute, or to the nearest 1/10th minute (6 seconds). This can be tricky, but you do have some grace (either 59 seconds or 5 seconds).

HOW DO I START TSD RALLYING?

The above is fairly simple, but, it can quickly get very complicated when doing it the first few rallies, in a moving car. Before you decide if TSD rallying is for you the best advice is:

- Relax, ignore the calculations. Forget doing ANY time calculations and compete "seat-of-the-pants" and see how you do. For the lack of effort you may be pleasantly surprised at the result you obtain. **BUT DO THE ODO CHECK!!**
- Enter a few rallies. The first one is usually the toughest. Any vehicle will do, but you must show proof of ownership and insurance, and the vehicle must be safe.
- **STAY ON THE ROAD.** Do not drive beyond your ability. After a few rallies as your driving improves, you will start being on time more often.
- Add about 10% to the requested speed. This helps you catch up from when you have to slow down for turns and stop at STOP signs and any unexpected delays you may encounter. Behave: a challan will get you disqualified.
- Do NOT hog the road. Give way to fellow competitors and locals if they want to get by you. When you pass someone, or leave a checkpoint, do not spin gravel and dirt on their car. You wouldn't like it, so why should they.
- **STAY ON COURSE.** Do not get off the route (i.e. don't get lost). If you get lost, you're already late, so try to not get lost! The stopwatch won't help you here.
- Never follow another team (they may get you lost!)
- Listen to the navigator he or she is your guide.
- The last of your worries is to **STAY ON TIME.**
- Ask questions from more experienced rally people. Don't be intimidated by people who have cars with big lights and fancy clipboards. We all had to start from scratch.
- Have fun!!! If it isn't fun, why bother?