

# *Time-Speed-Distance Rallying*

## *What is it and is it fun?*

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JCNA is making an effort to increase participation in the official rally activities of our clubs. At one time, this was a major part of the members' fun with their cars, but it seems to have been a bit forgotten in recent years. Let me re-introduce you!



Pre-start gathering of an all-Jaguar rally with just five teams, all from the Capital Region (NY) Club.



A lovely rally road: rolling, no traffic, pleasing views, even on a cloudy day.

TSD (Time-Speed-Distance) rallies are safe, legal driving events on public roads: usually scenic and always worthy of your car and careful driving skills. Competitive, of course, but also supportive and fun for all. Here's how they work as a safe, fun, pastime that is super-easy to mix with social distancing where needed.

### THE ROUTE

A rally master chooses a route, typically a run of two to four driving hours - usually just 50-100 miles; this is not a high-speed game. For larger weekend events, multiple such 'legs' can be provided. Notably, our Northeast Rally Club does two weekend events in most years (yeah, COVID stopped us in 2020) – and those comprise four such legs: Friday afternoon, Saturday morning and afternoon, and Sunday morning. JCNA considers those as four separate rallies for records purposes.

A rewarding route will include mostly secondary roads (all paved) and combine interesting views with minimal traffic and end up at a worthwhile spot including bathroom availability if longer than a few hours.

Once the route is chosen, the rally master makes a listing of the steps that will be given as instructions. These can have any usable form, but are mostly just written guidance, much like what you would see in any map directions list taken from your computer. For TSD use these will usually also include a specific speed, if not indicating to hold the posted limit, and cite landmarks and signs to be noted or obeyed, along with turns where appropriate. Many clubs use a kind of graphic representation for each step to show the lay of the roads at each step change, but simple one-sentence written steps are used, too.

Once the route is detailed, the rally master drives it several times, carefully timing how long each step takes and choosing 'checkpoints' along the way. Four to six such checkpoints are the norm for each leg. In larger events, these can be manned, but they can also be just clearly visible landmarks where participants mark passage times for themselves. The idea is to capture actual passage times for each team, for comparison to the rallymaster's carefully checked times (easy for him/her, as they know the route already). The scores are differences between participants' checkpoint times and the official rallymaster's times, with early or late arrivals at each being equally weighted in seconds (or minutes). Low score wins. A perfect score on any leg (yes, it does happen) is called an 'Ace,' and gets a special sticker announcing that!

General Instructions: Leg 1 (35 min) ViaPORT to Ft Johnson BEGIN RALLY 10:30 - 11:00 (by SPACED RELEASE)

Inst.#	T/Up	TTL Dist/Time BEFORE this STOP	Distance/Time This Stop	NOTES	HUNT & SPECIAL NOTES
10		0.0 / 0:00	1.8 /	START is From ViaPORT at Light by Burger King. Your Cars will leave at Approximately 10:15. Rally cars will be released 20 minutes later, at 1 minute separation.	What was ViaPORT called before it became ViaPORT?
11		1.8 /	3.3 /	Turn right onto NY 159	

Sample instructions, first two steps, showing typical instructions that include road diagrams.



One navigator's fancy set-up: clipboard with instructions, a clock and a pen.

A team for TSD rallying comprises a standard road-legal registered and insured car (preferably a Jaguar, of course!), a licensed driver and a navigator. There are no modifications required to the car and the only equipment needed is a clipboard, pencil, and timepiece (clock). Each team is assigned a start time, usually separated by one or two minutes from other teams, so the 'correct' time for passing checkpoints is based on that departure moment. The navigator has the written instructions on the clipboard and keeps the driver advised of the next item ahead and what speed to proceed. Both watch

for it, and the driver works to maintain the specified speed. The navigator checks off each completed step, and records checkpoint times.

Holding speed is not too difficult (cruise control not allowed though). And for the most part, making the correct turns and seeing the cited landmarks and checkpoints is straightforward, too. And for a beginner, those are the two main tasks: hold speed and stay on course. With experience, finer adjustments can be made, including making allowances for times at stop signs and traffic lights, corrections for errors in speed or incidental traffic, and so forth. All those things do happen. One of the best features of this competitive activity is that you're really competing with yourself, to be the best you can, and all your fellow rallyists will be happy to work with you and help you in that process. Your author has been rallying this way now for about fifteen years, in events as small as one morning's loop, all the way to two-week cross-country runs. I have found a second family in friends there and have never been refused helpful advice from more experienced teams, and as I have gained some ability I have been pleased to share with newcomers. I invite you to join this growing group!

That's the basics, though as noted above, there are fine points as expertise is gained (most rallies offer novice and experienced classes). It's not hard to describe because it's not hard to do – and like all good games, it's fun and challenging for novices and experts alike, without presenting safety risks or any unusual wear on the cars.



Post-rally gathering with firemen in background.

Of course, no rally is complete without a gathering and meal at the end, where “goofs” and “whoops-recoveries” are shared, and scores and awards are announced. Many good stories are repeated or invented, and friends are made and celebrated, with many returning year after year. This might be as simple as a lunch at a restaurant at the end of a morning rally; for larger groups, it is also often linked to a charitable organization like a volunteer fire company that can provide a meeting hall and possibly even some meals (for longer multi-leg

events). In that case, we provide a suitable donation, either by an entry fee or sometimes a silent auction of donated items.

#### HOW TO SET UP A RALLY

Probably the question I most often get from clubs considering setting up a rally is how to do the course preparations and how much work is it? For a first rally, perhaps just a single half-day leg; the answer is, it's easy and not much work. As a rally master, I do those myself by choosing some possible roads while in my easy chair, looking at Google Maps or similar tools on my computer, especially with a satellite view. Then I go out and drive those roads, discover some aren't as pretty as they looked, or I find an appealing alternative I didn't note on the computer screen. For that first exploration, I don't worry much about time – I just look for good roads that will be fun to drive. I go home and write up the instructions based on that, then engage a willing accomplice (oft-times my kind spouse, but at other times a willing pal) to navigate as we drive it again. I always find I made some error and we correct that on this second run. We also hold the target speeds and record our times as we would in the actual rally. I make one last

run with the corrected instructions (ideally with a different navigator), and that does the trick with the route set-up.

For the actual rally day, I print up instruction sets for each team, call the restaurant where we'll end up with a final headcount and our expected time of arrival, and head to the starting point. When all teams have arrived, we hand out the instructions, review how to read them and note any possible issues (like construction at instruction 11, or a missing sign though it's noted on the instructions). Then we send the teams off with at their set times and separations, and they enjoy their drives.

At the end, for such a self-timed, one-leg event; teams just hand in their recorded checkpoint times (usually just written on the instruction sheet), and the rally master (yes, that's me) compares them to my own and figures the team scores and who places first, second and third. We often give a 'Lost Cat' award as well, for the largest error!

Longer events, like the weekend rallies done by the Northeast Rally Club, do include more precision in layout and the added logistics of meals and hotels, but for your local Jaguar club, the half-day format is the way to go, at first anyway.

JCNA encourages you to consider setting up TSD rallies in your club. There are several experienced experts in the Rally Committee, located in various JCNA regions, who will help you with the set-up and even the running of an event. Don't miss the fun of driving your Jaguar in a friendly, safe and fun competition where you can show just how well you can follow directions and maintain speeds while enjoying the countryside and its sights. Pages will be reserved in Jaguar Journal for your reports.



Your author-driver and my spouse-navigator Sue: class winners (for once) with trophies to show for it!