

HOW TO RIDE ENDUROS

PART 2: Now that you've got all the details worked out, the bike prepped, and your goggles fogged up, let's go find the starting line

by **DAVE EKINS**

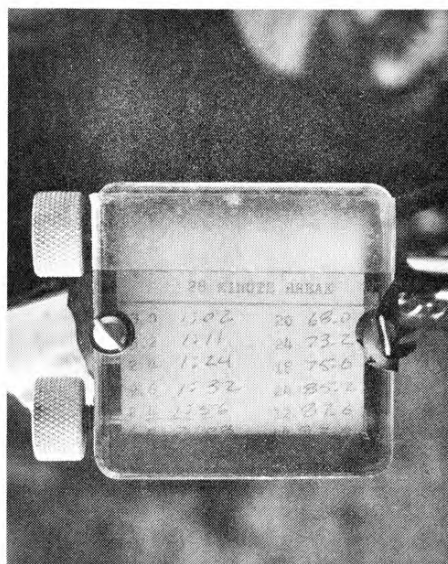


Last year's 500-mile national championship Greenhorn enduro: This rider is having his time card marked. Lady on left is displaying the 50th minute on flip cards. If the number plate on that Husky is 50, he's on time. The card behind the bike's rear wheel designates this spot as Check E, key time 11:15, so the time of the Husky's arrival should be 11:15 plus 50 minutes (12:05). Card shows miles from start and miles from last speed change.

So, after reading last month's Motorcyclist you've got your bike tuned and you're ready. Silicone seal is oo-zin' out of the mag cover and there's enough silver tape skillfully applied to the air filter to set a broken leg. There is a spot on the floor where oil has been drippin' off the chain and that old ridin' jacket is fairly bulging with tools and spare sparking plugs. Sounds like the bike is ready, but how are you gonna' stay on time?

This month we are going to start out with the simplest time-keeping method specially designed for the serious dummy. Staying on time means riding in the middle of your minute. Your minute is where you should be according to the miles you have ridden and the average posted by the club.

Keeping it simple, a 20-mph average means it takes an hour to cover 20 miles, or 3 minutes to go one mile, or .333-mile per minute. An 18-mph average is one where you would cover .3-



Rolltape-type route holder is a Webco product, Venice, California. This is one of the better ones because it offers a large viewing window. Scotch tape is used as a reference line.

mile each minute, that would mean .9-mile every 3 minutes. The popular 24-mph average works out to 1 mile every 2½ minutes, or 2 miles each 5 minutes. Confused? Well, don't worry about that just now.

"In the middle of your minute" means that minute plus 30 seconds. If you were supposed to arrive at a check at 9:10, you can get there any time from 9:10:00 until 9:10:59. You have a total of 60 seconds, so being right at 30 seconds keeps you in the middle of the minute.

Highly recommended for the beginner is the "roll tape" method. You need the two items every timekeeper needs plus a third, an odometer resettable in either direction to the tenth-mile, and a timepiece. The third item is a roll tape holder. In it is a long piece of paper that you have labored on for hours recording the minute and corresponding odometer reading according to the "enduro schedule." The sched-

ule tells you how many miles you're expected to ride and at what averages. The drill is to look at the odometer; say it reads 10.0 miles. Your roll tape shows at 10.0 miles the time should be 8:20. They should all match up with the second hand sweeping past the 6, or the 30th second. Sounds precise? It is.

Now let's take it apart more closely. Most bikes come with very good front-wheel-driven tenth-reset speedos. Those of us who get around to dismantling our speedos for various reasons usually remove the mph indicator workings and paint the face black. This takes some load off the speedo drive cable plus eliminating some potential pieces that may fall apart and jam other things.

Timepieces are many and varied. Most common type is a wristwatch. Spring-wound watches with balance wheels seldom seem to be able to give consistent time. The problem is vibration transferred to the watch from the bike. The balance wheel goes crazy. I happened across a balance wheel-type watch that has worked well over the past three years. It's an electric-powered Seiko, but very few have been imported into this country. Those modern quartz watches have been working out real well. The ones with the digital readout are not practical because you've got to press a button with your other hand in order to see the numbers. Also the sunlight will wash the image out.

The roll tape is just that, usually a thin roll of paper torn from an adding machine. When you have a route schedule well before the enduro you can take the necessary hour or two and program the run on a minute-to-minute basis, or mile-to-mile. Some enduros, like those held in Northern California won't give you a route sheet; they prefer to post the averages and mileage along the way. But we will be pretend-a-riding an enduro complete with route sheet and speed changes. Oh yeah; back East and down Texas way they don't much care for having a lot of speed changes either.

You roll up to the starting line about five minutes before you're supposed to start. You're starting with three other guys on the 38th minute. It doesn't matter if you know them or not, you will before the enduro's over.

Park the bike, walk over to the starter, if it's allowed, and match your watch to his watch right down to the second. A good watch will stop the second hand which makes this drill a whole bunch easier.

Go back to the bike, take your place on the starting grid and check to make sure you have the time card with you that will get marked at the checks. Get the engine running and zero the odometer as you reach the starting line. The

man will wave you off when the second hand is straight up. You are on your minute and from here on you will try to stay within that 60-second time slot.

The schedule says you are on a 15-mph average for the first 4 miles, with a speedo check at the 3-mile mark. There cannot be secret checks within the first 3 miles so you might as well get it on. Ride in the middle of the trail, paying particular attention to trying not to use the front brake. Over-



Do not fold, spindle, punch, lose or mutilate time card. Little Velcro closing pouch fastened to tank with silver tape secures and protects card.

use of the front binder will give you some funny odometer readings.

Pull straight up at the 3-mile odometer check, stopping with your front wheel at the sign. If you and the layout bike matched up, both should read 3.0 miles from the start. But you read 2.9 and you know yours is right because you checked it with the state highway markers. Well that's true, but the run has been laid out with this odometer that's one-tenth short in 3 miles and the whole run is gonna' be one-tenth short every 3 miles so you've got to stop every 2.9 miles and roll it up to 3.

A 15-mph average means you've got to cover one mile every 4 minutes. The 3-mile marker equals 3x4 which is 12. So that 12 minutes plus the 38 minutes after the hour which you started on equals 50 minutes. You leave the odometer check exactly 30 seconds after 9:50.

From here on out there could be a secret check, particularly at the speed change just another mile down the trail. Your odometer shows 3.5 miles as the second hand of your watch sweeps past 30 seconds after 9:52, you are riding in the middle of your minute. You arrive at the speed change at 9:54. Reset the odometer to

to zero and advance your roll tape to the next average. The sign reads: "18 Mile Per Hour Average For The Next 4.5 Miles." You look at your watch and the second hand is sweeping past 9:55 straight up. You're 30 seconds late! No problem, don't panic. Just ride a little fast until you get back into the middle of your minute.

18-mph averages are easy because for each minute you are supposed to cover .3-mile. The roll tape shows 9:54 as the time of the last speed change and you zeroed the odometer back at the last speed change. All you have to remember is to advance the odometer a tenth at each 2.9 miles for odometer error.

According to the rules (and not everybody follows them), they can only have a check on the whole minute. That means on an 18-mph average they can post a known or secret check at any .3-mile from the speed change. So here you are riding along the trail watching other riders, your wristwatch, the odometer, and looking for course markings. Your left thumb is advancing the roll tape as the miles and time tick off and you even find time to wonder why you're doing all this. Eventually the riding part becomes second nature, staying on time is the game.

It's usually about this time, with your mind spinning off in a hundred different directions, that you motor around a clump of something and there's a secret check. You fumble around trying to remember which pocket you put your time card in while the checker nervously waits. You look over and see a gal sitting in a deck chair with a stack of 12x12 cards. The numbered card you're looking at is 38, your riding number and minute. What do ya know, you're on time. When you get your card back you check to make sure the checker wrote in 38, glance at the mileage marker at the check to verify that its mileage and yours agree (if it doesn't, correct to the posted mileage and hope you did the right thing). Put it in gear and get it on, you've got the next 3 miles to play. All you need do is to stay on course so that the odometer records properly, and run faster than the posted speed average.

When your 3 miles are up, haul it down and wait for the clock to catch up with the distance you've gone. This is one of only two bike competitions I know of that allows you to stop and look at the scenery from time to time. Enduros offer some pretty breath-taking panoramas.

When your watch catches up, wait 30 seconds and fall back into the disciplined riding style that keeps you on time. A speed change to 12 mph. Reset the odometer to zero and figure on covering a mile every 5 minutes, or .2-mile each minute. Easy? No, it's a

HOW TO RIDE ENDUROS

tough schedule in a nasty section with other riders plugging up the path. You've two choices: find a way around, or wait. It's best to keep moving and there is no other way around so you kick, claw, scratch, and run over a few guys turning them into a whole bunch of enemies. You later get to a fiendishly placed secret check just in time to see the lady flip her time card over to 39 as you arrive. You scream at the deaf checker who writes in 39 anyway. Your odometer reading matches the posted card. You consider getting off your bike to see if your watch is the same as the checker's, but by this time some of those guys you recently rode over are beginning to show up at the check so you sneak outa' there in a big hurry.

This is the way it goes, riding on the half-minute, making odometer corrections every 2.9 miles, zeroing the odometer at each speed change and advancing your roll tape as the miles and minutes tick off.

It's getting close to the end of the first loop, and the last three miles are open territory. It's a 45.5-mile loop with the last section 3.9 miles long. At .9-mile you just blast into the control, there is no penalty for being up to 15 minutes early at a known check. Some enduros won't have known checks, even lunch and finish are unknown.

You've got to start into the second loop at 12:38. Allow yourself a few minutes to find the starting place. The second loop is much the same as the first except somewhere out there is the tie-breaker, or seconds check. This is the one you're supposed to hit at 30 seconds after the minute exactly. 15 seconds in either direction can cost.

After an easy check at a speed change, they throw the tie-breaker at you. It's during a 24-mph section and you're lucky to have gotten in under the minute, not having had time to worry about the 30th second.

The drill's the same, just the style changes from area to area. Southern California likes to throw in speed changes; the East and Midwest just give you one average, making a variation over the ground you've got to cover, putting a secret check at the end of a difficult section allowing the faster riders to score well. Up in the Pacific Northwest they don't give you any information beforehand at all. You just ride and look for cards along the way. But they are all fun and a challenge, besides, where else can you stop along the way and drink in all that far-out scenery!

NEXT MONTH
Dave Ekins explains
team riding, rule
bending and gadgetry. •



Enduro champion Bob Steffan's route information is nothing more than a stack of cards held with a heavy paper clip. Fine unless it rains. Clock is war surplus Wackmann model O-ring-mounted for shock-proofing during roller coaster ride.

GLOSSARY—HOW TO RIDE ENDUROS PART TWO

Course: Anyplace a motorbike can be ridden. Well-marked so you don't get lost.

Trail Markers: Things hung along the way so you don't get lost. In the desert, ribbon tied to sage, and lime thrown on the ground. In woods, usually colored arrows fastened to tree trunks.

Checks: The places where you get your perfect score altered if you're not on time. A point for each minute late and two points for each one early. (In some areas they take 5 points off for each minute after the first early minute.)

Type A: *Known*—listed on the route sheet by a number, you can be 14 minutes and 59 seconds early without penalty; a second later gets you disqualified. You will be docked a point for each minute late, however.

Type B: *Unknown or secret*—not listed on the route sheet (that's what makes them secret,) but could be at speed changes, the other end of a dark tunnel, or under a large rock.

Promoting Club: Those guys who worked their tails off and wore out a couple of bikes so you could have some fun, then bitch at them when it's over.

Your Score: 1000 points given to you at the starting line free of additional charge. What you lose during the ride is all up to you and how good (lucky!) you are.

Score Card: That long piece of thin cardboard you carry with you and present to the nervous guy at the check. Lose it and you might as well go home.

Speedometer Check: The exact place where the pilot bike's speedometer reads 3, 5 or 10 miles from the starting line. (3

miles for runs of less than 100 miles and 5 or 10 for those of a greater distance.)

Free Territory: That distance between the start and speedo check; also that distance 3 or 5 miles after any known or secret check. This is where you can race or have fun without penalty of nailing a check early.

Odometer: The part of your speedometer that tells you how many miles you've gone. Resettable type allows you to tumble the tumblers for "zero" and corrections.

Zero: Resetting your odometer back to zero.

Speed Change: The place on the course where the speed average changes. Usually marked by a card 12" x 18" showing such pertinent information as what the new mph average will be, for how many miles, the key time, total miles covered to that point, and miles from last speed change.

Key Time: The time the imaginary rider on minute zero should arrive at each check. Rider Number 1 is always one minute behind "key time."

Speed Average: The average speed you're supposed to be riding.

Tie Breaker or Seconds Check: A secret check where they record your arrival time to the second. Plus-30 seconds is perfect time, plus-15 is 15 seconds early and plus-45 is 15 seconds too late. (Riding on the half-minute is the ideal place to be.)

Slapping of Wrist: Penalty for getting to check early.

Gas on your own Time: Means just that, make it up by riding fast.