

“Meet in the Middle Rally” 2008 – Letter to Competitors

from Rich Bireta and Albert Weaver

Events like the May 17, 2008 "Meet in the Middle" Road Rally cannot occur without a significant volunteer effort on the part of many people. We mentioned our gratitude to these folks Saturday, but a “Thank You” bears repeating. Thanks again to:

Garry Deaton and Bob Strattan for assuming unexpected checkpoint responsibilities in Atchison and keeping the rally running,
Randy Gregg and Don Christman for a great Topeka starting location,
Dan McConnell of the HOA Z Car Club and KC SCCA for event promotion,
The KC Mini Enthusiasts Club for providing three entries,
Derrick Carpenter, for working the Topeka start and checkpoint 2, and
Devon and Anne Marie Bireta, for working the KC start

The concept for the Meet in the Middle Rally started in 2005 at the end of the March Madness Rally sponsored by the Kansas Region SCCA. We were sitting at the finish at the Emporia Zoo bemoaning the fact that there had been a great day of rallying enjoyed by only 10 entries. Why couldn't we boost the size of the entry field by having a rally start in both Wichita and Topeka and a convenient ending location near Emporia?

The first two Meet in the Middle Rallies were held in March 2006 and March 2007 with starting locations in Topeka and Wichita, both rallies ending at the Chicken House Restaurant in Olpe, Kansas. The 2006 event drew 25 cars (15 from Topeka and 10 from Wichita). The 2007 event drew 8 cars, 4 from each city.

Changes made for 2008 included changing the second starting location from Wichita to Kansas City in an effort to draw a larger field of contestants. Given the price of gas, the length of the rally was shortened some two hours compared with the 2007 run. With the help of Dan McConnell, we reached out to the marque clubs in the Kansas City area to draw new participants to the event.

As we put this rally together we had several goals:

- 1) Enlarge the entry field and rally participation in the SCCA MidWest Division
- 2) Attract participation from several local SCCA Regions
- 3) Create the kind of rally that we like to participate in:
 - A) Use fun & interesting roads that participants might not normally encounter,
 - B) A clean time-speed-distance rally without tricks or traps, and no teams lost,
 - C) Timely and accurate results.

We met several but not all of our goals. We are deeply gratified by the turn-out of 16 teams. The route was intended to be trap-free, and **everyone** made it to the finish. We hope you agree that the roads were interesting and fun. (Isn't that last stretch in Missouri a blast? **Those** are what rally roads ideally should be!)

We had issues with our route instructions that we will work diligently to improve the next time around. For the KC starters, there was a twisted road sign at 142nd and Loring Road that made it appear that was the place to turn after Coit Trucking. (The intended turn was another .08 mile down the road.) We missed recording the SL 55 sign west of McLouth, causing rallyists to drive 35 in a 55 zone for a distance. Lastly, scoring the rally took way too long and for this we apologize. We will have a faster and accurate scoring process for future rallies. We welcome any other suggestions from you.

Scoring Issues: We decided to merge leg 3, where there was scheduled to be a checkpoint at the BP Amoco station in Atchison. The Atchison checkpoint worker (Albert) was late, trying to help teams recover from the Loring Road turn problem. Contestants who restarted after getting back on course from the Loring Road turn used their restart time without need for a Time Allowance. We ended up combining the leg times for leg 3 (into Atchison) with leg 4 (into Weston) and scored that as one leg. We offer our sincere apologies for these problems.

We would like to thank our rally entrants: We'd like to thank all of you for your involvement, good sportsmanship, and patience during and after the rally. Most importantly, we hope you had **fun**, and we hope to see you again soon on the rally road!

Overall Results

The overall finish is slightly different than the results we announced at the Weston restaurant. We apologize to our overall winners – Pego Mack and Steve Nelson - and to Bob Strattan and Garry Deaton as well. (As a historical note, it seems I made a similar scoring mistake in 2006, when Pego and Steve ultimately proved to have won the first MITM Rally). The winning margin was three seconds – one second per leg!

The overall results are:

Car	Driver	Navigator	Car	Start	Total
4T	Pego Mack	Steve Nelson	Red WRX	Topeka	42
1T	Robert Strattan	Garry Deaton	Red Escort	Topeka	45
1	Devon Bireta	Anne Marie Bireta	Gold Honda Civic	KC	71
7	Dave Craven	Ivan Cabezas	Blue Mini Cooper	KC	71
5	Dan McConnell	Paul MacRoberts	Blue 350Z	KC	76
3T	Lori Goetsch	Marty Courtois	Red Mini Cooper	Topeka	191
6	John Dority	Jacob Records	Silver Miata MX5	KC	260
6T	Julie Avard	David Avard	Gold Jeep Cherokee	Topeka	263
2T	Randy Gregg	Alan Neukirch	Red Ford Mustang	Topeka	336
4	Pete Kerckhoff	Renee Kerckhoff	Cobra Replica	KC	343
10	Steven Berger	Dale Smith	Grey Cherokee	KC	372
3	Travis Heckes	Lacey Ziegler	Jaguar X	KC	482
9	Kevin Demers	John Bianco	Yellow Mini Cooper	KC	486
2	John Nelson	Phyllis Nelson	Honda S2000	KC	509
5T	Mike VanDam	Ron Kass	Black Crossfire	Topeka	519
8	Tony Ray Dunavant	Lea Craman	Orange GTI	KC	731

Here are the leg-by-leg scores:

Car	Driver	Navigator	Car	1	2	3	Total
4T	Pego Mack	Steve Nelson	Red WRX	9	10	23	42
1T	Robert Strattan	Garry Deaton	Red Escort	12	15	18	45
1	Devon Bireta	Anne Marie Bireta	Gold Honda Civic	14	34	23	71
7	Dave Craven	Ivan Cabezas	Blue Mini Cooper	59	7	5	71
5	Dan McConnell	Paul MacRoberts	Blue 350Z	9	12	55	76
3T	Lori Goetsch	Marty Courtois	Red Mini Cooper	168	17	6	191
6	John Dority	Jacob Records	Silver Miata MX5	1	46	213	260
6T	Julie Avard	David Avard	Gold Jeep Cherokee	71	149	43	263
2T	Randy Gregg	Alan Neukirch	Red Ford Mustang	7	29	300	336
4	Pete Kerckhoff	Renee Kerckhoff	Cobra Replica	11	88	244	343
10	Steven Berger	Dale Smith	Grey Cherokee	0	300	72	372
3	Travis Heckes	Lacey Ziegler	Jaguar X	55	187	240	482
9	Kevin Demers	John Bianco	Yellow Mini Cooper	7	300	179	486
2	John Nelson	Phyllis Nelson	Honda S2000	300	84	125	509
5T	Mike VanDam	Ron Kass	Black Crossfire	243	221	55	519
8	Tony Ray Dunavant	Lea Craman	Orange GTI	300	196	235	731

Kansas Region, Midwest Divisional, and National Championship Scoring (three additional variations of scoring)

The Kansas Region SCCA follows the National SCCA rules, classifying contestants based on their mileage measuring and calculating equipment.

Entries in SCCA Equipped:

4T	Pego Mack / Steve Nelson	Red WRX	42
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Entries in SCCA Stock:

1T	Robert Strattan	Garry Deaton	Red Escort	Topeka	45
5	Dan McConnell	Paul MacRoberts	Blue 350Z	KC	76
3T	Lori Goetsch	Marty Courtois	Red Mini Cooper	Topeka	191
6T	Julie Avard	David Avard	Gold Jeep Cherokee	Topeka	263
2T	Randy Gregg	Alan Neukirch	Red Ford Mustang	Topeka	336

Entries in SCCA Novice:

1	Devon Bireta	Anne Marie Bireta	Gold Honda Civic	KC	71
7	Dave Craven	Ivan Cabezas	Blue Mini Cooper	KC	71
6	John Dority	Jacob Records	Silver Miata MX5	KC	260
4	Pete Kerckhoff	Renee Kerckhoff	Cobra Replica	KC	343
10	Steven Berger	Dale Smith	Grey Cherokee	KC	372
3	Travis Heckes	Lacey Ziegler	Jaguar X	KC	482
9	Kevin Demers	John Bianco	Yellow Mini Cooper	KC	486
2	John Nelson	Phyllis Nelson	Honda S2000	KC	509
5T	Mike VanDam	Ron Kass	Black Crossfire	Topeka	519
8	Tony Ray Dunavant	Lea Craman	Orange GTI	KC	731

The tie between cars 1 and 7 was broken using the traditional road rally method of squaring each leg score and adding the results. (This technique resolves the tie in favor of the team whose leg scores were more accurate more often.)

The year-long **MiDiv Regional Rally Series** classifies participants by experience level:

MiDiv Experienced:

4T	Pego Mack	Steve Nelson	Red WRX	Topeka	A	42
1T	Robert Strattan	Garry Deaton	Red Escort	Topeka	A	45

MiDiv Stock:

3T	Lori Goetsch	Marty Courtois	Red Mini Cooper	Topeka	B	191
6T	Julie Avard	David Avard	Gold Jeep Cherokee	Topeka	B	263
2T	Randy Gregg	Alan Neukirch	Red Ford Mustang	Topeka	B	336

MiDiv Novice:

1	Devon Bireta	Anne Marie Bireta	Gold Honda Civic	KC	C	71
7	Dave Craven	Ivan Cabezas	Blue Mini Cooper	KC	C	71
5	Dan McConnell	Paul MacRoberts	Blue 350Z	KC	C	76
6	John Dority	Jacob Records	Silver Miata MX5	KC	C	260
4	Pete Kerckhoff	Renee Kerckhoff	Cobra Replica	KC	C	343
10	Steven Berger	Dale Smith	Grey Cherokee	KC	C	372
3	Travis Heckes	Lacey Ziegler	Jaguar X	KC	C	482
9	Kevin Demers	John Bianco	Yellow Mini Cooper	KC	C	486
2	John Nelson	Phyllis Nelson	Honda S2000	KC	C	509
5T	Mike VanDam	Ron Kass	Black Crossfire	Topeka	C	519
8	Tony Ray Dunavant	Lea Craman	Orange GTI	KC	C	731

Finally, the **national SCCA rally championship** rules require that when a class has only one car, classes are to be combined and Stock Class scores multiplied by .3 for comparison with Equipped Class cars. Thus the results for the SCCA national scorekeeper are:

Car	Driver	Navigator	Car	Start	Adjusted Total
1	Robert Strattan	Garry Deaton	Red Escort	Topeka	13.5
1	Devon Bireta	Anne Marie Bireta	Gold Honda Civic	KC	21.3
7	Dave Craven	Ivan Cabezas	Blue Mini Cooper	KC	21.3
5	Dan McConnell	Paul MacRoberts	Blue 350Z	KC	22.8
4	Pego Mack	Steve Nelson	Red WRX	Topeka	42.0
3	Lori Goetsch	Marty Courtois	Red Mini Cooper	Topeka	57.3
6	John Dority	Jacob Records	Silver Miata MX5	KC	78.0
6	Julie Avard	David Avard	Gold Jeep Cherokee	Topeka	78.9
2	Randy Gregg	Alan Neukirch	Red Ford Mustang	Topeka	100.8
4	Pete Kerckhoff	Renee Kerckhoff	Cobra Replica	KC	102.9
10	Steven Berger	Dale Smith	Grey Cherokee	KC	111.6
3	Travis Heckes	Lacey Ziegler	Jaguar X	KC	144.6
9	Kevin Demers	John Bianco	Yellow Mini Cooper	KC	145.8
2	John Nelson	Phyllis Nelson	Honda S2000	KC	152.7
5	Mike VanDam	Ron Kass	Black Crossfire	Topeka	155.7
8	Tony Ray Dunavant	Lea Craman	Orange GTI	KC	219.3