

LONG-DISTANCE ENDURANCE RIDING

PLAN • PREPARE • EXECUTE

How to plan, prepare and successfully execute
an Iron Butt Association certified ride

Greg Rice

Long-distance endurance rider • gregrice.com

Safety first. Documentation always. Consistency beats speed.



Three things have to go right

A successful endurance ride is a system — not a single heroic effort.

1 Get home safe

Every decision is subordinate to safety. A failed certification is recoverable; an unsafe decision may not be.

2 Meet the ride requirements

Distance, elapsed time, route and any ride-specific rules all have to line up.

3 Prove what you did

Receipts, photos, logs and route evidence turn a long ride into a certifiable IBA ride.

Think of the ride as an operating system: ROUTE + TIME + RIDER + BIKE + DOCUMENTATION.

START HERE

The rules define the plan

Read the current page for the exact ride you intend to certify before you build the route.

1,000

MILES

SaddleSore 1000

< 24 hours

1,500

MILES

Bun Burner 1500

< 36 hours

300

MILES

**Maximum between
fuel/documentation stops**

for large-tank SS/BB claims

Current U.S. SaddleSore/Bun Burner guide: Version 6.4, revised August 13, 2026.

The IBA maintains ride-specific rules and they can change.

Source: Iron Butt Association — SaddleSore 1000 / Bun Burner 1500, Version 6.4, revised Aug. 13, 2026.

01

PLAN

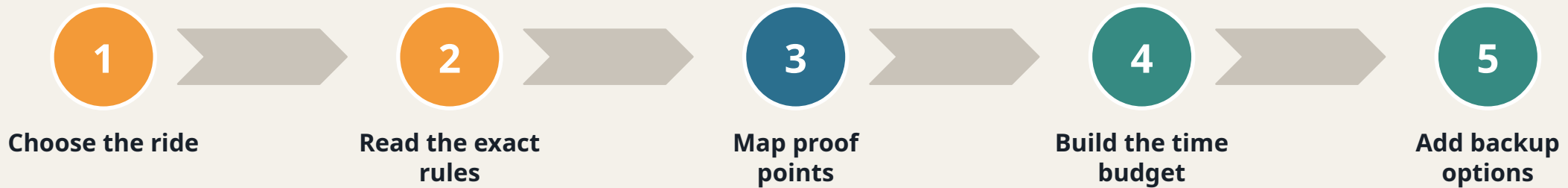
Build a ride that works on paper first

Your route must be safe, achievable, documentable and resilient when reality changes.



Plan from the certificate backward

The finish line is defined before the motorcycle ever moves.



Design question

"What evidence will prove I was here, at this time, on this route?"
Build those points into the ride rather than improvising them at 2:00 a.m.

Operational question

"What do I do when the preferred fuel stop, road, weather window or piece of technology fails?"

Choose the easiest safe miles — not the prettiest line

The ride is already hard. Do not make the route harder without a reason.

Road type

Favor roads that support a legal, steady pace and have predictable services.

Traffic windows

Route around commuter bottlenecks, events, holiday traffic and known chokepoints.

Fuel coverage

Know the real spacing between reliable stations — including late-night availability.

Weather exposure

Check heat, cold, wind, storms, fog and mountain conditions along the entire time window.

Construction

State DOT / 511 systems can reveal lane closures and long work zones before departure.

Time & daylight

Account for time zones, sunrise/sunset and the fatigue cost of night riding.

The secret is not speed — it is time management

Overall average speed includes every fuel stop, receipt problem, meal, traffic jam and rest break.

Example only: 1,000-mile ride at a 68 mph moving average

14h 42m MOVING

5h 18m STOP /
CONTINGENCY MARGIN

20-hour finish

14h 42m MOVING

3h 18m STOPS

18-hour finish

Build your own time budget

- Real moving average
- Number of fuel stops
- Typical stop duration
- Meal strategy
- Planned rest
- Traffic / weather margin
- Documentation time

Lost time should be recovered by simplifying stops or changing the plan — never by “making it up” with speed.

IBA guidance emphasizes that these rides do not require speeding. Time-budget example is illustrative, not a target pace.

Fuel stops are both logistics and evidence

Know where you expect to stop, where you can stop, and what proof you need to leave with.

1**Use a conservative usable range**

Plan from a repeatable real-world range, not the best number the motorcycle has ever shown.

2**Have a backup station**

Especially at night, remote corridors and small towns. A “24-hour” pin on a map is not enough.

3**Make the stop routine repeatable**

Fuel → receipt → inspect receipt → photo → log → hydrate/stretch → depart.

4**Document the route corners**

Turnarounds and route-defining locations need proof sufficient to establish the route.

5**Protect the receipt**

Do not discover 12 hours later that the city, date or time is unreadable.

6**Remember the 300-mile rule**

For the core U.S. SS/BB guidelines, large-tank motorcycles still need at least one fuel/documentation stop every 300 miles.

Know what is waiting 500 miles ahead

Greg Rice's planning process combines weather, traffic and construction data before departure — then keeps checking it during the ride.

WEATHER**Heat • cold • wind • storms**

Do not plan only for the start city.

RADAR**What is moving into your path?**

Time a stop or route change before the storm owns you.

DOT / 511**Closures • work zones • incidents**

Mark known problem areas before you leave.

TRAFFIC**Rush-hour windows • events**

A 20-minute bottleneck can become a 90-minute problem.

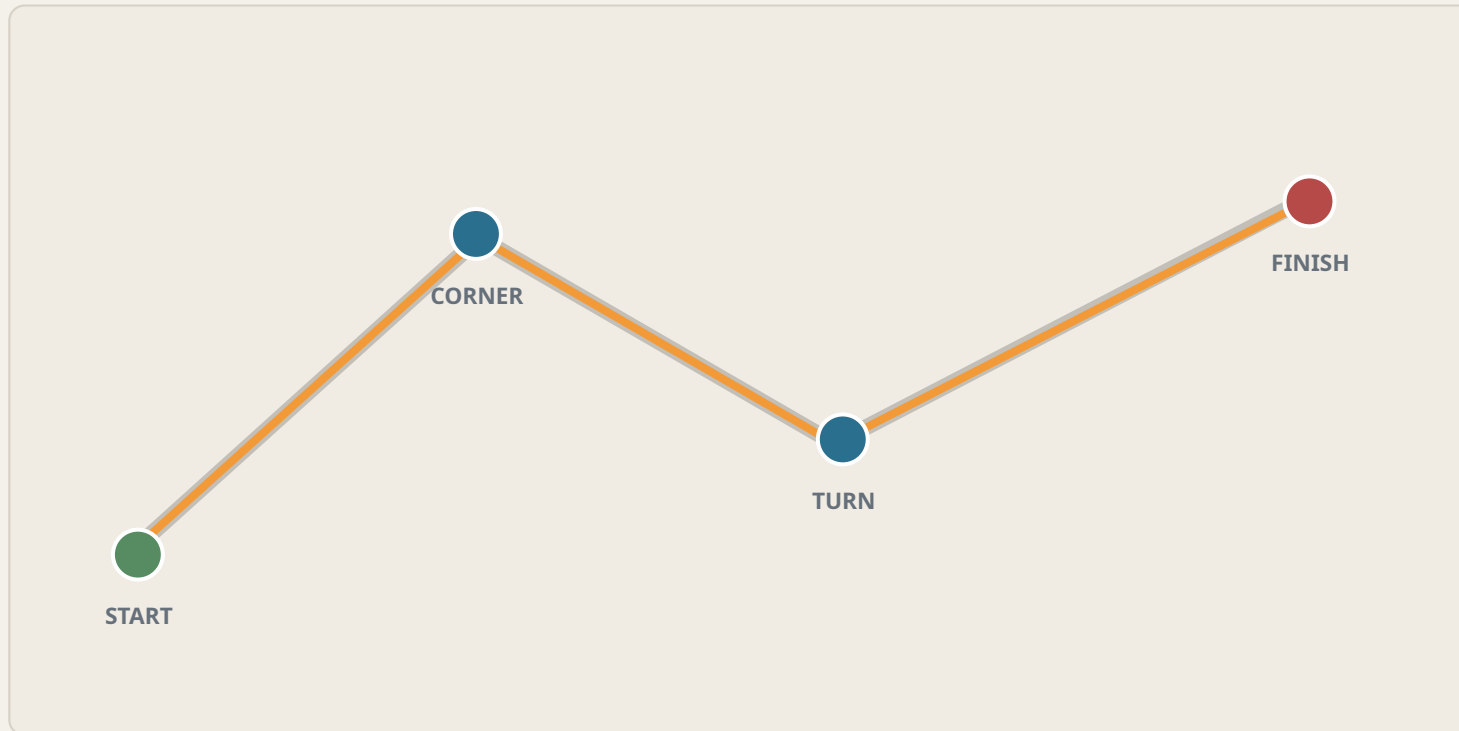
Operational advantage

A rider who already knows where the construction zones, fuel gaps and weather fronts are can make decisions calmly — before time pressure and fatigue arrive.

Source: Greg Rice — Coast 2 Coast planning page and IBA rides page (weather, radar, DOT construction research and GPS alerts).

Design a route that is easy to verify

The easier your claim is to understand, the less time you spend explaining it after the ride.



Every proof point should answer

Where? • When? • Which direction / route?

Good redundancy

Receipt + odometer photo + geotag / track creates a much stronger record than any one item alone.

When proof fails

Photograph the business, address or GPS location and document the situation as well as you can.

02

PREPARE

Make the bike and rider boringly reliable

A long-distance ride is the wrong place to discover a new mechanical issue, new gear problem or new personal limit.



Start with a known, sorted motorcycle

Reliability beats novelty. Finish all changes early enough to test them on real rides.

TIRES

Enough tread for the entire ride plus contingency. Correct pressure, no mystery punctures.

FASTENERS / CONTROLS

Nothing loose, sticking or newly installed the night before.

BRAKES / FLUIDS

Inspect pads, fluid levels, leaks and service status.

LIGHTS / VISIBILITY

Headlights, brake lights, reflectivity and night-ride readiness.

ELECTRICAL

Battery health, charging system, lighting, accessory loads and fuses.

PRE-RIDE CHECK

Use a repeatable inspection routine such as T-CLOCS or your own equivalent.

IBA “Archive of Wisdom” principle: prepare the motorcycle before the trip — and avoid last-minute maintenance or accessories.

Carry enough to solve the likely failures

You do not need a rolling workshop — you need a compact kit matched to your motorcycle and route.

Flat repair

Plug / patch system you have actually practiced using.

Air

Compact compressor plus pressure gauge.

Basic tools

Fasteners and adjustments unique to your motorcycle.

Electrical

Fuses, small meter/test light, charging cables.

Light

More than one flashlight/headlamp for roadside work at night.

Power

Portable battery pack for phone / headset / GPS emergencies.

Recovery

Towing / roadside plan — and a realistic understanding of remote coverage.

Bike-specific spares

Only the small parts that commonly strand your model or setup.

Prepare the rider before the clock starts

Fatigue management begins before the motorcycle leaves the driveway.

SLEEP

Start rested. Do not turn ride day into the second half of an already-long day.

HYDRATION

Begin hydrated and make small, regular intake easy from the saddle or stops.

FOOD

Choose familiar foods that support steady energy without creating long stops.

CLOTHING

Layer for the coldest and hottest conditions you may see, not just the forecast at home.

HEARING

Wind noise adds fatigue; hearing protection can reduce noise load.

MINDSET

Be willing to abort. The plan is a tool, not a command.

IBA: no rider — regardless of experience — can safely “fight off” fatigue. If you are tired, stop and rest.

Comfort is a safety system

Small irritations become big distractions after 12, 16 or 20 hours.



Wind

Screen height / airflow / neck load

Hands

Grip diameter / throttle effort / gloves

Seat

Known seat / pressure management

Feet & knees

Peg position / room to move

Temperature

Heated or cooling gear ready before needed

Hydration

Easy access without turning every drink into a 15-minute stop

Rule of thumb: fix hot spots, pressure points, noise and control effort during training rides — not during the certification attempt.

Redundancy prevents small failures from becoming ride-ending failures

A route is only useful if you can still navigate it after one device, cable or data connection stops working.

PRIMARY GPS

Main route and waypoints

PHONE / BACKUP

Offline map + alternate routing

HIGH-LEVEL ROUTE

A simple overview you can understand without electronics

POWER

Bike power + backup battery / cable

TRACKING

SpotWalla / satellite / app as backup or when the ride requires it

Do not let “technology redundancy” become “distraction redundancy.” Configure it before departure and keep the cockpit simple.

Sources: Greg Rice planning pages (multiple GPS / tracking); IBA ride pages where tracking may be ride-specific.

Make documentation part of the cockpit workflow

The best time to discover your camera timestamp, receipt process or log system is wrong is before the start receipt.



Correct ride rules saved / accessible



Trip log ready



Phone camera location metadata enabled if useful



Folders / naming system for receipt photos



Start / end / corner proof plan



Pen, backup pen, small envelope or receipt storage



Tracking link tested if used



Emergency contacts and route shared

Build the habit now: every stop ends with “Do I have the proof?”

03

EXECUTE

Ride the plan — and know when to abandon it

Execution is disciplined repetition: legal pace, efficient stops, continuous self-assessment and complete documentation.



The ride begins with a clean evidence chain

A disciplined start prevents the most frustrating kind of failure: finishing the miles but losing the certification on paperwork.



Bike ready

Fuel, pressures, lights, gear, navigation.



Start DBR

Obtain a computer-generated start receipt that clearly establishes place and time.



Photo

Photograph the receipt with the odometer as required/recommended for the ride.



Log it

Record the stop while you are still there.



Roll

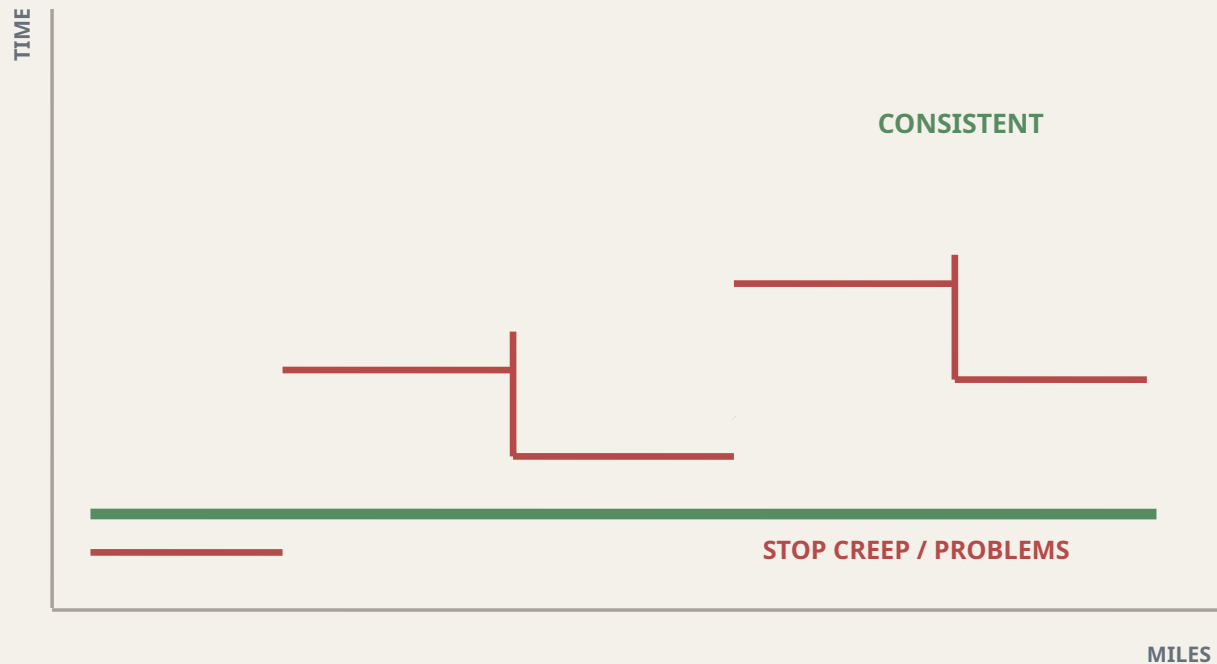
Ride the plan; the clock is now real.

Practical rule

Never ride away from a critical documentation stop until you have looked at the actual receipt and the actual photo.

Ride a steady legal pace and protect your time bank

The best endurance pace feels almost boring — until you realize how much time chaos costs.



Legal pace

Do not chase time with speed.

Short predictable stops

The routine should be practiced and repeatable.

Eat smart

Do not turn every fuel stop into a restaurant stop.

Check the clock

Know your overall average, remaining margin and next decision point.

A sample fast-but-complete fuel stop routine

Efficiency comes from order and repetition — not rushing. Adapt the sequence to the specific ride rules.



The “fastest” stop is the one you never have to reconstruct later.

Target times vary by rider, motorcycle and documentation requirements. Practice the workflow instead of chasing a magic number.

Fatigue is a stop condition — not a character test

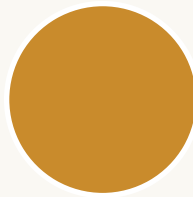
By the time you are negotiating with yourself about whether you are tired, you should already be looking for a safe place to stop.



GREEN

ALERT

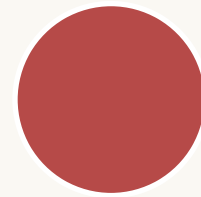
Normal scanning, smooth decisions,
comfortable pace.



YELLOW

DEGRADED

Repeated yawning, wandering attention,
missed signs/exits, irritability, poor lane
discipline.



RED

STOP

Pull off safely and rest. Do not use speed,
willpower or stimulants as a fatigue-
management strategy.

When the plan breaks, protect the rider first

Long rides always create surprises. Your contingency plan determines whether the surprise becomes a disaster.

Receipt printer fails

Photograph your location, the business and whatever proof is available; make a log note immediately.

Road closes

Reroute legally and re-check both distance and time. Add proof if the route becomes ambiguous.

Storm blocks the corridor

Stop, wait or detour. Weather is allowed to “win.”

Mechanical problem

Fix only what is safely within your capability; use roadside recovery when it is not.

Rider is fading

The ride is over until the rider is safe to continue — certification pressure is irrelevant.

Time margin disappears

Change the goal. Do not convert a schedule problem into a speed or fatigue problem.

A ride can fail on paper and still be a successful decision.

Sources: IBA Documentation Guidelines (“document your position as best you can”); IBA safety guidance.

A group adds support — and new risk

IBA guidance specifically warns that group dynamics can pressure riders to continue when they would otherwise stop.

BEFORE THE RIDE

Agree on pace, fuel range, stop duration, passing behavior, communication and what happens if a rider stops.

DURING THE RIDE

Ride your own motorcycle. Keep safe spacing. Do not turn a rider's short stop into a debate or a group vote.

THE NON-NEGOTIABLE

Every rider owns the right to slow down, rest, change the plan or end the ride without pressure from the group.

The group is only successful if every rider finishes safely — even when “finish” means stopping early.

Finish the evidence chain before you celebrate

The ride is not administratively finished until the end proof, photos and log are secure.

END DBR

Obtain the required end receipt before the time window closes.

VERIFY

Read city, date and time — do not assume the printer got it right.

PHOTO

Capture the receipt / odometer proof clearly.

BACK UP

Copy photos, track and notes while they still exist on multiple devices.

LOG

Finish the trip log and explain unusual stops or documentation issues.

SUBMIT

Use the current IBA submission process and include the required route / documentation package.

Electronic submission is preferred where the ride page allows it. Follow the current ride page, not an old checklist.

What Greg Rice's ride history says about preparation

More than 100 certified IBA rides — including 90+ Bun Burner Golds — built around the same basic discipline.

130+
IBA-certified rides

97
Bun Burner Golds

Up-front planning

Research the route, weather and traffic before the ride instead of solving predictable problems during it.

Construction awareness

Greg checks state DOT sites and can mark major work zones in his GPS so the slowdown has context.

Prepared for roadside problems

Tire repair, compressor, lights, charging and recovery items are selected because long routes can put help far away.

The lesson is not the mileage count. The lesson is repeatability.

Ten rules to remember

A compact checklist for the next time you build a certified long-distance ride.

- 1 Read the current ride rules first.
- 2 Build mileage and time margin.
- 3 Plan the documentation with the route.
- 4 Use a known, tested motorcycle.
- 5 Start genuinely rested.
- 6 Keep fuel stops repeatable.
- 7 Monitor weather and road conditions.
- 8 Do not recover lost time with speed.
- 9 Stop when fatigue appears.
- 10 Protect and back up your evidence.

PLAN IT. PREPARE IT. RIDE IT. DOCUMENT IT. GET HOME SAFE.

Primary resources used in this presentation

Always re-check the specific IBA ride page before an actual attempt.

Iron Butt Association SaddleSore 1000 / Bun Burner 1500 — Version 6.4, revised Aug. 13, 2026

<https://www.ironbutt.com/themerides/ssseries/>

Iron Butt Association Documentation Guidelines — Version 7.3, June 2026

<https://www.ironbutt.com/themerides/documentation/>

Iron Butt Association Archive of Wisdom — long-distance riding tips from IBR veterans

<https://www.ironbutt.com/ibmagazine/IBMag01-200.pdf>

Iron Butt Forum Rider Preparation, certified ride reports and planning discussions

<https://forum.ironbutt.org/>

Greg Rice IBA rides, ride planning, weather / DOT research, equipment and ride reports

<https://www.gregrice.com/rides/rides.html>

NHTSA / MSF Drowsy-driving and motorcycle pre-ride / safety guidance

<https://www.nhtsa.gov/risky-driving/drowsy-driving> •
<https://msf-usa.org/>

Presentation note

IBA rules and documentation can change. The official ride page is the authority for a real certification attempt.

THE BEST LONG-DISTANCE RIDE ENDS WITH YOU HOME SAFE.

Questions / discussion

Greg Rice • gregrice.com

Plan it. Prepare it. Execute it. Document it.

