



Tom Fuchs, Ron Ayres and Mark Campbell in Hyder, AK

In 1998, a man by the name of Ron Ayres shattered the world record for riding to 48 states in 6 days 31 minutes. He continued on to create a new record which included Alaska or 49 states. Thus, the ride became known as the 48+ (48 states plus Alaska). Ron wrote a book about this adventure "Against the Clock".

Over the years, the book "Against the Clock" has always been a conversation piece among long distance riders. The Iron Butt Association (IBA) is the organization that validated Ron Ayres amazing ride. The IBA has a series of long distance rides for anyone to participate in. The IBA encourages new riders to start out with shorter rides before tackling the longer, more demanding rides.

These rides require a lot of seat time. We basically eat on the bike and try to only stop for necessities such as fuel and restroom breaks. When we do stop, we keep my time off the bike to a minimum. You can become proficient enough to ride 1,000 miles in 16-18 hours. By completing 1,000 miles in 16-18 hours, you have time to get plenty of sleep for the next 1,000 mile day.

Ron Ayres celebrates his world record ride every year in Hyder, AK by hosting an event known as "Hyder Seek". (Note: Hyder, Alaska is the southern most accessible town by road in Alaska.) Typically, this is when other riders try to tackle this ride and meet Ron Ayres in Hyder for his annual celebration. This year, Hyder Seek was scheduled during Memorial weekend (May 25 & 26)

Now, about this ride:

I had planned this ride for over a year. Several months ago, Tom asked if he could join me. This had been a dream of Tom's for many years. I'm glad Tom rode with me. He was a great riding partner during the trip.



Mark Campbell in Hyder, Alaska

Our plan was to ride over 1,000 miles a day for 7 days. Then, day 8 would be about an 800 mile day and day 9 would be a 444 mile day. This planned worked well for us.

On May 11, Tom and I rode down to Slidell, LA. This would be our starting point. I had 2 start witnesses lined up. Bob Brockhoff (from the IBA witness list) and Terry Braud (from the MTF). Both are IBA members. Bob had evening plans so he met us about 2:00 pm that afternoon. Terry was there at 7:00 pm to sign us off. Tom and I would get a good night's sleep before starting at 3:14 am local time.

Daily plan: Tom and I had an agreement - We would be at the bikes ready to roll at 4:30 am every morning (local time). Local time gave us an extra hour when we changed time zones (good idea). Both of us were always early and excited to start a new day. When we stopped for a required receipt or fuel, we would limit our talking, do what we had to do and get on the bike ready to ride until the other person was ready. We would also alternate as the lead bike after every fuel stop. We would eat on the bike during the day. Then, when we stopped for the evening, we would eat a hot meal. This would allow us to end our day between 9:00 - 11:00 pm. This type of discipline was the key to our success!

Food on the bike: Tom and I both carried beef jerky and protein bars as our food source on the bikes. The protein bars were a natural source of protein (low carbs) and tasted great. Once I started the ride, I only drank water. This diet did exactly what I intended... I was never sleepy. Actually, the second hour of the second day was most tiring to me.

No caffeine, no sugar and little or no carbs are the key (for me anyway).

Riding Gear: I wore my First Gear Kilimanjaro jacket and Joe Rocket protective riding pants the entire trip. Tom wore very similar gear. These are Gore Tex all weather riding clothes. When it was cold, I would add my heated electric Gerbing jacket liner. 93 degrees in 3 hours of traffic in Chicago, it did get warm. But, 93 degrees in 3 hours of traffic would be warm in anything. We probably looked like spacemen when we walked into the gas station in Needles, CA with our helmets on in the sweltering heat to ask for a receipt! But, this attire worked well for all types of weather. I wouldn't have changed a thing.



Tom Fuchs enjoying life

Weather - Lucky for us, we had ideal weather. We started a few days earlier than most. I took a tip from another long distance riding friend about riding through New York City on a Sunday. This was a great tip! From Slidell, LA to New Mexico, we only got sprinkled on twice. In Acoma, NM, we stopped late one night as we ran into a thunderstorm. Once it started raining, we exited off and found a hotel (actually, a casino). Of course, when we hit the Seattle, WA area, it was raining. And, we were in and out of rain our first day in British Columbia. We did encounter some brutal winds in northern MN before arriving in ND. These winds lasted for about 60 miles. Other than that, the high temperature was 100 degrees just outside of Las Vegas and 28 degrees the morning we left Vernal, UT.

Special Equipment – Tom and I both have the additional option of CB radio on our Gold Wings. This allowed us to talk between ourselves during the ride. We could also communicate with truck drivers, if needed, for additional information concerning weather or traffic.

A few months prior to our trip, Tom and I had the new Garmin 2820 GPS unit installed on our bikes. These GPS units included an MP3 player, XM radio and Bluetooth capability. The Bluetooth feature allowed the GPS to be an interface between us and our cell phones. Plus, it was all integrated into our Gold Wing communication system. This allowed us to answer the phone or dial out and talk while we were on the bikes. This was a great way to keep in touch with our wives, family and friends throughout the ride. It was also a backup system for Tom and I in case we ever got out of CB range of each other.

Problems: I had called my credit card company before I started the trip to let them know that I would be traveling all over the USA. Well evidently, that wasn't good enough. Our second night, we stopped at a hotel. We had just ridden our toughest day of the whole route (thru Baltimore, New Jersey Turnpike, New York City, Boston and back roads through New Hampshire and Vermont). Needless to say, I was beat! The lady behind the counter at the hotel said that my credit card authorization says to hold it. I said "WHAT?" You're not going to hold my credit card! Well sir, I'll have to call my manager. I could just envision this lady pulling out a pair of scissors and cutting my credit card in two. I didn't foresee this problem since I had called in advance and warned my Credit Union of my travels. Luckily, the lady got off the phone with her manager and it was their policy not to hold someone's card. I paid with cash. It was 11:30 pm. It had been a long day, but this was my only credit card. I did have a debit card, but was afraid it would get flagged too. I thought this was going to be a deal breaker right here on the second day. I look at the back of my credit card and see an 800 number. Will they take a call at 11:30 pm? They do! I talked to the fraud protection department at 11:30 pm! He didn't say it, but I took it there is an automated system that flagged my card. He said that I would have to verify some charges since there were multiple fuel stops in several states. As the man on the phone started going over a list of fuel charges, I said "STOP!!!" Sir, I would like to make this clear! I am not going to some states! I am not going to many states! I am going to EVERY state! The man on the phone says "you mean all 48 states?" NO! I mean all 49 states in North America! The man says "OH MY!" I'll get this taken care of right away sir, he says. Your card should be good to go in about 20 minutes. If there is still a problem, please call us back tomorrow during normal working hours. That was the end of that problem. No other issues with my credit card during the remainder of the trip.

A few days later, as we were heading west across the northern finger of Idaho, our side of the interstate had construction. We were down to one lane. I was leading. As the second lane opened up, 2 cars in front of me took the left lane to pass an 18 wheeler. As those cars moved out of in front of me, a rock/brick (15 inches x 15 inches square, 6 inches thick) was right in front of me. When I hit it, my front tire made a loud pop as my tire pinched the edge of this rock. This flung the rock to the left shoulder (imagine stomping

on the side of a pool ball and it sliding out from under your foot). I thought the rock was clear of Tom's path, but evidently I only saw one half of the rock. The other half went to my right (not as fast) and in front of Tom's tire. Tom hit this rock at 45 mph. (It would be like running into a high curb at 45 mph). His Gold Wing jumped over it (not gracefully, I might add). Tom had to stop to inspect his wing. His front tire had a chalk mark straight across it. On both sides of his tire, his rim was bent/creased. Darn! Tom looked at it closely. On one side of his tire, you could stick a flat tip screwdriver in-between the rim and the tire, clear to the bead. Tom said, I don't think it broke the bead. Tom checked the air pressure. It was a couple lbs low. He said, if it doesn't vibrate or wobble, I think I'll continue on. So, we rode on without any other problems. After talking later on, Tom and I decided that the rock must have been cracked before I hit it. Then, it split apart. We were both glad it wasn't worse than it was.



Riding into Hyder, Alaska was a great thrill! When Tom came over the CB and said we had 100 miles left to Hyder, I knew we were going to make it. Over a year of planning had worked out perfectly! Once we arrived in Hyder, we rode directly to the Sealaska Inn (Hyder Seek Headquarters) for our final receipt. The owner of the Sealaska Inn knew we needed a receipt with the location, date and time. He double-checked their credit card receipt printer to insure the time and date were correct. I purchased an Alaskan Amber with my credit card for my final receipt. It's still hard to believe that we rode to all 49 states in 8 days, 14 hours and 14 minutes! Since they only had one receipt printer, Tom's official time is a couple of minutes longer than mine due to the fact his receipt was printed next.

Tom and I arrived in Hyder on Sunday. The Hyder Seek event didn't start until the following Thursday. So, we had several days to check out the area, do laundry and just chill out until others would start arriving in town for the event.

Hyder Seek is hosted every year by Ron Ayres to celebrate his world record ride to all 49 states in 7 days, 20 minutes. There were a total of 156 people ride up to Hyder for the event. These are people that have completed the 49 state ride (present and past) or just needed a reason to venture up to Alaska for the Halibut. This year, 12 people completed the 49 state ride (including myself and Tom). The other 10 riders started from various parts of the USA. We are known as "The Hyder Seek Class of 2007". To date, there are less than 100 people that have documented this ride thru the IBA since its inception 10 years ago. It was great to meet friends (old and new) and spend a couple of days talking about traveling experiences such as this! What a ride!



Hyder Seek 49ers Class of 2007 (left to right):

Thomas Kidwell, Robert Ransford, Chris White, John Barrow, Johnny Frazier, Mike Tomsu, Tom Fuchs, Darrell Herron, Mike Schwartz, Michael Boge, Mark Campbell, Carl Stark

The morning following Hyder Seek, Tom and I rode to Prince George to spend the night. This would allow us the next day to ride through the Canadian Rockies together. We spent the night in Cochrane, Alberta (near Calgary) before parting ways the next morning.



From Cochrane, I made it to my parents house in Fairmount, IN in 2 days (~1,900 miles). I rode a 1,000 miles to Fargo, ND the first day, then on to Fairmount, the next day. I visited with my parent's for a day before continuing on home to Newnan, GA.

Tom said the weather conditions in the Yellowstone area were rainy and cold, so he continued east from there. We both ended up in Georgia about the same time on Friday, June 1.

How does the IBA verify that we have traveled to all 49 states?

The IBA requires participants to have 2 witnesses to verify the odometer reading at the beginning of the ride and 2 witnesses to verify the odometer reading at the end of the ride.

Once the witnesses are signed off, receipts are required documentation during the rest of the ride, most commonly gas receipts. The receipts must have the following information: location, date and time. The next time you fill up your car at a major gas station, look at the receipt. Today, all of this information is usually there. If not, we needed to get a receipt from another gas station, store, ATM, etc. with the proper information.

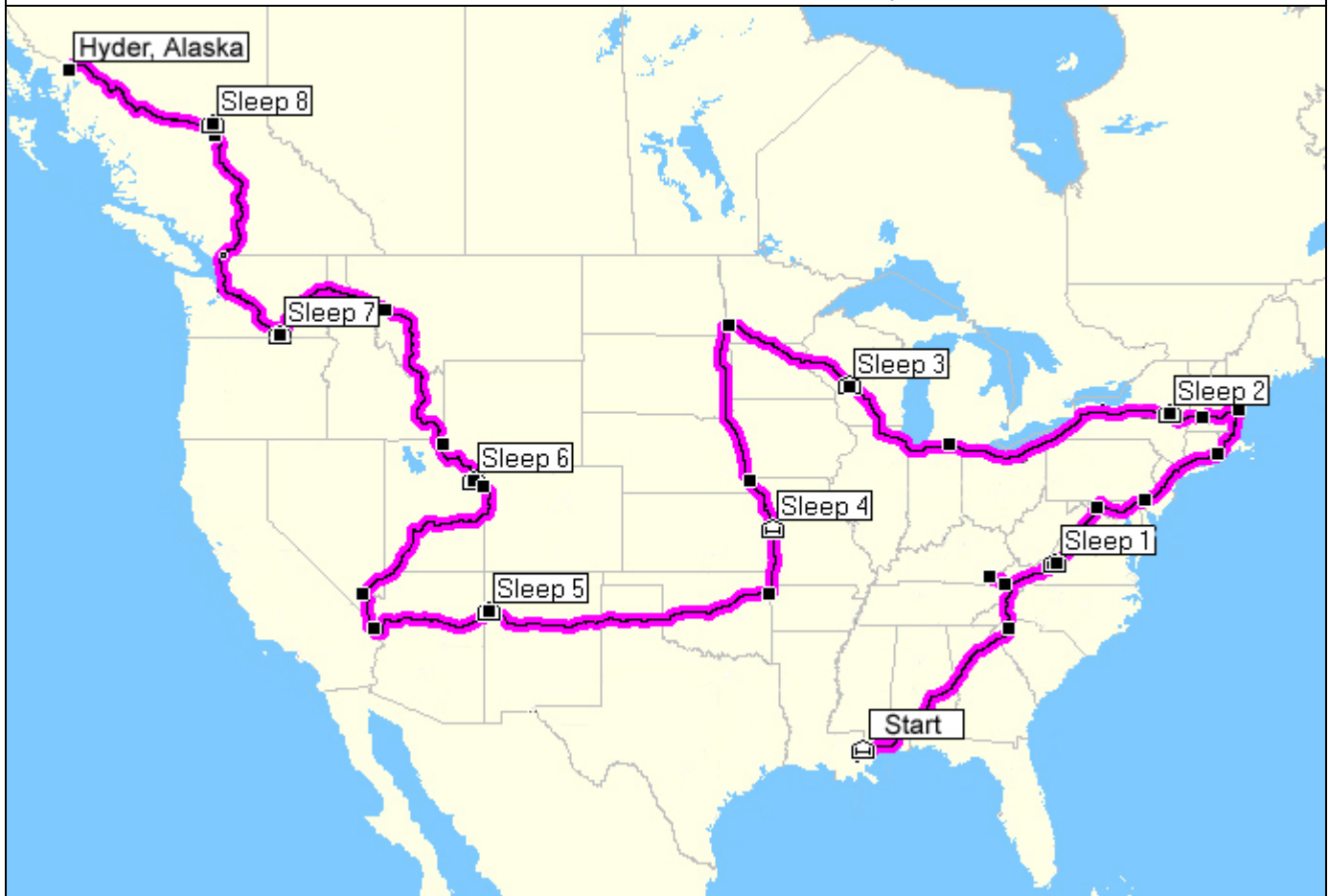
The first receipt will show the start time and location. Then, we were required to obtain receipts with this information in every state. The final receipt in Hyder, Alaska was our official stop time.

A ride log is also required by the IBA. Every time we stopped, we logged the time in/time out, location and our odometer reading.

Once we have completed the ride, we submit all of this documentation to the IBA for review and official validation. The IBA will enter all of our receipt locations into a mapping program and compare the mileage to our odometer mileage for official validation (remember, between the start odometer reading and the end odometer reading were verify by witnesses).

Note: If someone was to attempt a new world record for the 48+, the IBA criteria is more stringent.

Mark & Tom's 48+ Route (8 Days, 14 hrs, 14 min)



8,694 miles starting in Slidell, LA, ending in Hyder, AK

The Daily Itinerary

May 11 - Day 0 - Rode to Slidell, LA spend the night in preparation for trip.

May 12 - Day 1 - Rode to Salem, VA (~1,035 miles). States completed: LA, MS, FL, AL, GA, SC, NC, TN, KY, VA.

May 13 - Day 2 - Rode to Amsterdam, NY (~1,005 miles). States completed: WV, MD, DE, NJ, CT, RI, MA, ME, NH, VT, NY.

May 14 - Day 3 - Rode to Madison, WI (~1,010 miles). States completed: PA, OH, MI, IN, IL, WI.
May 15 - Day 4 - Rode to Shawnee, KS (~1,030 miles). States completed: MN, ND, SD, IA, NE, MO, KS.
May 16 - Day 5 - Rode to Acoma, NM (~1,040 miles). States completed: AR, OK, TX, NM.
May 17 - Day 6 - Rode to Vernal, UT (~1,210 miles). States completed: AZ, CA, NV, UT, CO.
May 18 - Day 7 - Rode to Hermiston, OR (~1,090 miles) . States completed: WY, ID, MT, OR, WA.
May 19 - Day 8 - Rode to Prince George (~820 miles), BC
May 20 - Day 9 - Rode to Hyder, AK (~444 miles). States completed: AK