

BIG BEND OPEN ROAD RACE



You hit the first sweeping curve at 118 mph - too hot. The car starts pushing to the outside. The rear starts to lift, just like they told you. You want to hit the brakes but you know better. You apply power and the back end settles, the car adheres firmly to the road. You keep pushing the pedal until it hits the floor. You wish there were more. You look at the speedo as you exit the corner - 142 mph. WOW! What a rush! Is this crazy? Perhaps. Is this open road racing? Definitely!

In the Big Bend area there are two cities: Fort Stockton and Sanderson, which are about 60 miles apart. They are connected by a wonderful stretch of highway known as US-285. Several years ago, someone had a great idea. Have DPS shut the highway down for a day so it could be used as a racecourse. Way Cool! Thus BBORR was born.



The official race distance from Fort Stockton to Sanderson is 59 miles. Thus the total mileage, there and back, is 118. When is the last time you had the chance to legally drive as fast as you want on a US highway for 118 miles and do so in relative safety? Me neither, until now!

Being the biggest moneymaker of the year for both cities BBORR is more than a race, it's a day-long event. There is a racer's parade down Main Street, a car show, an awards banquet, and numerous parties along the way. While competition on race day can be fierce, the camaraderie among the racers is something to be seen. Everyone is pulling for everyone else. We're all in this together! Our motto is: have fun, be safe, and come back next year!



The first step for a registered participant to go through is tech. Each racer is given a tech speed (never exceed speed) based on safety equipment, tire rating, etc. The lowest tech speed, 124 mph, can be accomplished basically with a helmet and fire extinguisher. Requirements for higher tech speeds, such as 160mph, are more stringent. Once given a tech speed, each racer chooses a target speed. This is the speed, which the racer tries to average over the length of the course. Target speeds range from 85-155 mph. The racer who is closest to his target speed is the winner in that category. Participants wanting to go faster would be in the unlimited class where there

is no target speed. The fastest car wins. Unlimiteds commonly exceed 200 mph.

On race morning, the racers are lined up in single file. Each car is released at a given interval with the faster cars requiring greater spacing. Thus, each racer virtually has the road to himself. There is some passing, but it's rare. It's hard to describe the feeling of anticipation of sitting at the starting line waiting for the flag to drop. You know you're some place special. As you launch, you see the speedo climb and climb. You hit triple digits and you know you'll keep it there. As you stage for your first right turn (by moving to the far left side of the highway...yellow lines have no meaning now) you know you're in a special place and time. You know you'll want to stay there and when it's over, you know you'll want to go back.



Come give it a try. You'll see...

Bob W Vance