

## **Regulation Change for Consultation – Rallies Committee proposal on Stage Rally Timing**

Apologies for this being last minute but while I had spoken with Lock about this, I had overlooked that I offered to feedback to the whole group until reminded by the last minutes being circulated.

The current Blue Book states in 31.1 that “All Special Stage rallies must use Target Timing. It goes on through the section to define Target Timing. Furthermore, 40.1 (still relating to Stage Rallies) states that “To be classified as a finisher, a Competitor must report to all controls listed in the Road Book .....

Many rallies, both single venue and multi venue, incorporate a form of ‘trophy rally’ to permit competitors who have not completed one or more stages to continue running but without being classified as finishers. Somewhat annoyingly, this arrangement is at odds with what happens in the World Rally Championship where a competitor can miss one or more controls and then can re-join an event, albeit with a penalty, and be classified as a finisher.

The Rallies Committee proposal to try to get round this is that Stage Rallies can adopt either Target Timing or Scheduled Timing (defined in 12.2 applicable to Rallies other than Stage Rallies). The key feature of Scheduled Timing is that a penalty is applied for missing certain controls (i.e. not completing all stages) but a competitor can still be classified as a finisher provided they visit all Main Time Controls without going Outside Total Lateness (OTL).

My view is that the proposed rule change would achieve the aim although I think the wording is possibly overly complex. I think it is simply a copy of the Road Rally regulation and may need some specific reference to Stage Rally situations e.g. the delay between stage arrival and stage start.

My view is also that, if adopted, event organisers will need to think very carefully about the unintended consequences of this approach. Specifically, the event organisers can’t be sure at any point in time that all competitors, who are still within permitted lateness, have arrived at any given control. This makes closing stages a problem which is compounded by double use and also by the need to allow gaps between certain sections of the field.

I can see it working well on single venue events, where maximum lateness is often very limited and where it is possible for organisers to account for all competitors more easily but I think is much less appropriate to multi venue stage events.

Note that the consultation period has officially ended and we should await developments with interest.

**Peter Weall**