

## 2004 Scooter Cannonball Run Final Results

**DISCLAIMER:** After riding for 8-9 hours a day, we found that we needed to spend our time doing maintenance on the bikes, or at least doing a once over on a daily basis. Riding for 300 miles a day while maintaining at least 60 miles per hour can loosen bolts you had a hard time loosening yourself before. This is why the updates are not as detailed as they could be.

There will be articles in both Scoot! Quarterly and American Scooterist Magazine, the member magazine of the VCOA.

There is much more to see and read from this amazing trip, so get the next issue of [Scoot!](#), and if you are not a member of the [VCOA](#), join now to get your copy of American Scooterist.

### Day Twelve: Sept. 23, 2004

Today was some of the worst riding we've had. We took route 66. Robert Benning was looking at these beat up sheds marveling that someone would call this wasteland home, when he looked back into the road to see yet another dog in his path chasing him. This one was bigger and smellier than the other three. The ride from Ludlow to Barstow had the worst road conditions we had seen on this entire trip, it had huge potholes, grooves, cracks, sand, you name it, it was on this road. After this point the road got a little better, still lots of sand though. Once we were off of Route 66 we were on roads seething with semi's, and after yesterday it made for some uncomfortable feelings.

JD and Robert were racing the whole way to NoHo, Robert made a few navigation errors and had to fill his gas tank every 60 miles and this just did him in. We rode into LA over the Angelis Forest, which was burned to the ground in the firestorms a few months back. It was a tad bit eerie. We then went through the last twisties we would hit and into SunValley and then North Hollywood and NoHo Scooters. JD came in first followed by Robert and hour and a half later. The rest of the riders were traveling as a group today.

---

### Day Eleven: Sept. 22, 2004

Today was cold as hell. 28° when we woke up in Flagstaff. There was frost on all the scooters. The route took us through Route 66. We went up over a mountain range with amazing twisties and came to a town called Oatman, an old west town. Today's route was pretty good.

It was getting dark and Rob Downs had not shown up. He had Mike Heytens cell phone so we called. A Paramedic answered and said Rob had been in an accident. Rob had a flat tire earlier in the day and after fixing it, he wanted to make up some time, so he jumped on the interstate. At this point in the day it was close to sunset, so he was riding into the sun. I semi behind him was changing lanes into the right-hand lane where Rob was and because of the sun in his eyes, he did not see Rob. The semi hit Rob, who was traveling at about 50-55 mph. The semi was going 75 mph. When the semi hit Rob the Li150 flew up in the air in front of the truck's windshield, and was then thrown about 100 feet to the right and ejected from the road. The side panels were even further away and at first the Cops didn't know what they were. Rob was thrown about 50 feet and into the left lane which had traffic also moving at 70-75 mph. Rob landed on his hands and feet and parts of his face, this is probably where Rob Shattered his ankle and broke his wrist, he also scrapped his knuckles and face a bit. The doctor was not sure if Rob broke his wrist, but Rob sure thinks it's broken. Anyway, after landing into a lane of oncoming traffic with a shattered ankle and a broken wrist, Rob dragged himself out of

the way of traffic with his cat like reflexes. And it's a good thing he did, because he may not have made it otherwise.

Rob was wearing a flip up helmet, but the flip up part had broke earlier in the day and Rob tore it off. So basically Rob was wearing a 3/4 helmet, A Joe Rocket Jacket, cheap gloves, a Camel Back, jeans and sneakers. Rob had very little road rash. One of the first things he said to us was "This jacket works."

Rob gets the "Most Hardcore" award. If it was not for that semi, Rob would have made it all the way to California on his Li150.

---

### **Day Ten: Sept. 21, 2004**

We had another good day. The wind has not died down at all though, and it makes the going very tough. The Tonto National Forest and the Coconino National Forest are beautiful and we had a great time riding through them. One of the roads on the route was not marked and Chopper, Kieran, and the Chase van went the wrong way and ended up 60 miles east and had to take the freeway to Flagstaff. Ashrat Robert and John almost did the same.

Rob broke his rear shock and went to a motorcycle salvage yard and pulled one off of a Honda and was back on the road. JD had jetting issues and was on the side of the road for two hours fixing it.

Robert and Ashrat raced all the way to Flagstaff running neck and neck at some point. Robert fell back at a few times because he's getting 30 miles to the gallon, but eventually passed Ashrat and took 3rd.

Everyone finished today, so it was a good day for all.

So, that's it for updates until Cali kids. It's been a blast. One gnarly desert day and the decent to LA left. We'll try and update the site on Thursday with the final results...but no guarantees.

---

### **Day Nine: Sept. 20, 2004**

Today was not bad for most. The wind was absolutlely brutal. Mike Heytens and John Smith were able to maintain 60 MPH, while all others struggled to maintain 40. While drafting trucks is not too much fun and can be dangerous, is was the preffered method to climb hills.

Ron again broke his pipe. Kieran's rusty rim cracked and cut the tube, so he was on the side of the road changing to his spare. JD's fuel line came off and started steaming off the engine and almost torched his Bajaj. We drove by the VLA ([Very Large Array](#)), and there is no pie in Pie Town.

---

## **Day Eight: Sept. 19, 2004**

Today started out with dark skies, albeit it was welcome after the high temps we've been riding through. Everyone dealt with heavy intermittent showers along the way. It was again very windy. The route was nice though. Long stretches of open roads with visibility as far as the eye can see. Barring the occasional cattle farm smells, it was nice. Hwy 55 and 337 through the hills was very nice.

Ron again rode the GT and got a flat. Rob is bogging and needs to down-jet (elevation is surprisingly high, +6500 ft.) - no jets to be had though so he's running w/o the baffle (needs to buy panty hose tomorrow - ohhhh, kinky).

We ended today's ride at Urban Transport who were celebrating their 2nd anniversary. There was food, beverages, and a couple bands. We purchased more oil (Motul) - we're running low on Rock Oil.

---

## **Day Seven: Sept. 18, 2004**

Today was even hotter, 102 degrees, and very windy. Between the wind and the semis, it made for some sketchy riding. The cooling vests were a hit and are highly recommended for anyone riding in hot weather (by Joe Rocket).

Robert's day started with an air leak. He rebuilt his carb and the scoot ran great after that. Chopper's bike was bogging - his fuel filter was floating. Ron had an inline filter which Chopper spliced to fit. He finished the day. Ron rode the GT today - his new shock arrived from WCLW but when it was being installed, it was noticed that his wiring harness was shredded from his rear tire.

---

## **Day Six: Sept. 17, 2004**

Today was VERY hot (98 degrees). The route was good. Robert was experiencing pre-detonation but started using octane boost to tame the problem. He however continues having problems with his spark plug cap. Ron's rear shock exploded and he rode Bobo's GT the rest of the way (thanks Bobo!). Mike installed a Leo Vinci pipe for today's ride - he was much slower as a result. Chopper, Mike, and Rob rode together most of the day.

The fine folks at Atomic Brown Scooters in OKC (JD's pit crew) were of great help to many of us. Chopper had a spare tire and rim shipped from Vespa Washington which was installed (was wearing thin) and he changed his rear brakes; Robert changed his oil and replaced a tire; JD had his tires rotated; Mike welded his bracket and re-installed his SIP pipe - he also welded Rob's rear rack which cracked. The Sputnik crew came out to greet us. Food and beverages were provided and we sought solace in the shop's air conditioning. Rob, Robert, and Chopper bought cooling vests for the upcoming desert rides.

Kieran hooked up a sweet room and MTV filmed a special edition of Crips - [Cannonball Crips](#).

---

### **Day Five: Sept. 16, 2004**

Hurricane Francis was a mere hour away from striking our hotel as we left for Mena, Arkansas. JD decided to sit the day out due to a sore wrist from his wreck the day before. The first part of the ride was rather bland - long straight open roads through the cotton fields of Arkansas. Rob soft seized 35 miles in but was able to continue. Ron's pipe broke a third time, in a totally different spot. He also got a flat. Pipe problems continued with Mike H's exhaust bracket cracked. He trailered and rode JD's bike the rest of the way. Chopper's bike continues to blow fuses but he's hanging in there. Ashrat lost her spare gas can and John was able to dodge it, and her spare tire. Everyone completed the day barring Mike.

---

### **Day Four: Sept. 15, 2004**

Today was long and hot. We left Chattanooga through the twisties, up the mountain and down the other side. Bobo was gracious enough to lend Stan his GT for another day of riding. Robert ran out of gas in the boonies and had three dogs chasing after him.

Ron's pipe broke yet again. He's in the RV. Chopper was blowing fuses left and right, but got the issues sorted. It's been amazing to see him keep going at it given the multitude of problems he's had to surmount.

There was a couch in the middle of the highway - luckily Mike Heytens was able to go around it. He was also going 70 in a 45 zone when a light turned red. He slammed on the brakes and came to a stop in the middle of the intersection.

JD was in the home stretch when some lady pulled out in front of him. JD high-sided. The scooter went one way, JD went another. The bike is rideable, it just doesn't look as pretty. JD has knee, wrist, shoulder and head damage. He'll be riding with us in the morning though.

---

### **Day Three: Sept. 14, 2004**

Day three was just amazing. We rode through the Cherokee National Forest on our way to the Dragon in North Carolina. [The Dragon](#) was amazing to say the least. Looking at the pictures on the wall of shame at Deals Gap, not to mention the tree with various bike parts and memorials hanging from it, makes you a bit nervous, but we all made it through.

We left there and went on the Cherahala Skyway. This road wound through the forest and along a huge lake. Some of us missed the poorly marked signs and ended up doing some freeway riding.

After the mountains there were some great back roads we went through.

Big thanks go out to Stan, Jen, and the other fine folks at Scenic City Scooters. They really hooked everyone up with much needed shop space and a great BBQ. Rons Pipe broke again, in a different spot - they fixed it up nice and pretty; Rob's clutch plates were replaced - which were in dire straits; chopper was able to drill a hole in his fender for optimum placement of his hydraulic brake line.

Also, we said our goodbyes to Imperial Cathy (Atlanta) and Bobo (MD) who joined us for a few days of riding. It was great to have them along and we only wish they were able to continue with us.

---

## Day Two: Sept. 13 2004

We woke up in Fancy Gap Virginia to fog and bitterly cold temperatures. JD was first out at 8:00 sharp. I think that will be the norm. John was right behind him, took a corner a bit too eagerly and low-sided. Nothing major, just scuffed up the paint job on his GT200. We knew the Blue Ridge parkway was closed in a few spots, but it turns out it was closed in three. We had no choice but to find new routes. Everyone seemed to find a different route, obviously, some shorter, some longer. We had to ride through some pretty bad road conditions, semi's, gravel, oil, you name it. JD almost ended up taking a dirt road, but John was hesitant after his spill so they took a detour. Kieran and Rob were contemplating taking chances going around the barricade, but smarter senses prevailed.

Chopper's fuel pump crapped out on him, but Alex happened to have an identical one for replacement. Alex has provided phenomenal support. Without him, a few of us would not even be riding today.

Ashrat decided to play chicken with a truck, and the truck won with the help of a guard rail. She sliced her right leg open pretty deep, but being the tough girl she is, she jumped back on her bike and rode for 50 more miles before Mike Heytens talked her into going to the hospital.

We made the route maps using "Streets and Trips," and we are finding a few errors. If anyone else is planning on doing this, bring good maps. We just buy new ones as we enter states.

Ron went to a Muffler shop and had his fractured pipe welded back up.

We had some good riding mixed in with the bad today. We were a bit worried we wouldn't find the hotel after all that riding but they had a sign out front for us.



## Day 1: Sept. 12, 2004

SCOMO kicked off the cannonball in style at their new shop. All 10 riders made it out, although Rob almost threw in the towel Sat. morning. Thanks to the truck bed of John Stafford, the lammy made it's way to the ingenious hands of Darren Lopez who quickly diagnosed the problem (the solder at the condensor was grounding the electrics). Chopper had some issues with his Frankenbretta (Jet 200 w/ ET4 engine) which were sorted in the parking lot.

Chelsea kicked us parts that we were in need of so big thanks go out to her. Food was had, beer was drank, and goodbyes were said.

Darren led the ride from SCOMO to Virginia Beach and was joined by Mike H., Robert SF, Greyhound, Ashrat, Ron Villa, Bobo, John, Chopper. Rob was in the RV (had yet to install new junction box) and Kieran. Darren was on a customer's bike and 30 miles into the ride had a clutch mishap. Since the trailer was full, the bike was loaded and Kieran unloaded his and rode the rest of the way. The 120 mile ride was completed and we arrived at the hotel around 2:00 p.m. where we were met by local scooterists from Norfolk. The motel was fairly shitty - next to the party strip in VA Beach - including a bout of bed bugs that descended upon John with fury (a couple of dirty hippies rented the room for a month). Everyone grabbed their gear and hit the sack.

We were all anxious to get on the road in the morning so we woke up at 7:30, took pics at the beach and were on the road by 9:00. J.D and John hit the road closer to 8:00 am. Once we left the coast the roads were great. We were making pretty good time seeing as how everyone was running off of four and a half hours sleep. Everything seemed to be going fine until we happened upon Ashrat and Ron. Ron was shedding bolts from his rear hub. Luckily Rob brought along a spare rear hub which was used to get him back on the road. Shorty thereafter, Ron's tailpipe cracked in two pieces. Alex used a Dr. Pepper can and wire to rig it back up.

Mike got a ticket for doing 37 in a 25 and was handsomely awarded a ticket by Lunenburg, VA's finest.

Later that day, Chopper hit some gravel on a down slope in the twisties and his front tire washed out. All that seemed to happen to the bike was the fuel pump started going out and eventually did. Chopper was fine, barring a slight scrape on his abdomen.

When we got to our Hotel, Stan and Jen from Scenic City Scooters in Chattanooga were there as well as Cathy from Atlanta. They will ride day two and three and ride the Dragon with us.

Alex (support vehicle) was worried about running out of gas. Little did he know that when he decided to crash on the side of the road, he was only 10 miles from our hotel. We were worried about whether he decided to ditch us through all the frustrations we gave him, but alas he arrived Monday morning.