

Treffen Tour Driving Team Considerations v2

From observations, feedback from participants, and best practices witnessed thus far, the following are my thoughts for Treffen tours.

General:

1. Do not treat or plan a Treffen tours like a region tour, you are dealing with participants that are not familiar with the local geographic area, cars other than Porsches (identification issues), larger tour groups than normal (up to 25 cars including the driving team), time constraints, etc. Take the time to plan with these considerations and execute a Treffen tour will make it an enjoyable event for both the host region volunteers and Treffen participants.
2. Tour travel time is not an issue after seeing our dry runs since most tours end up about one hour to hour and a half from the Broadmoor. I think if we can get people (for those who do not wish to venture on their own after lunch) back no later than 4PM, we should be fine. Take rush hour traffic into consideration on the drive out and return. There's no need to rush a tour, even if you are behind schedule.
3. Keeping the tour group together is essential for Treffen. We want to eliminate having people speeding to catch up to the main group after stoplights and turns; but don't slow down so much that you are blocking normal traffic either. The tour lead sets the pace but the mid and sweep need to communicate better to the team lead/mid to slow down when necessary. All tour drivers need to be briefed on paying attention to cars in front and behind so they don't get too far ahead or lagging behind to become the tour leader. If you do not see the cars behind you, you are going too fast -- pay special attention to corners and turns, this is where we lose people. Have everyone use flashers when pulling over the side of the road.
4. A number of cars in the tour groups will not be Porsches. We will hand out additional Treffen stickers at staging to put on non-P-cars to aid identification by mids/sweeps. The point is not to leave people behind because there is no way for the driving teams to recognize all the cars in their group. As for people being left behind, it has happened before for that reason, including a member of the EC.
5. Tour participants are given a time to show up for the tour, not the tour start time. They should arrive 30 to 40 minutes before start time. This will give them time to line up their cars, a bathroom break, and attend the drivers meeting.
6. Communications is always an issue. This goes for the both the driving team and participants. Best to set the expectation at the drivers meeting, the more detail we can give the better. There's not much we can do about the mountain/radio issues. If possible, plan for more stops and/or rendezvous points.
7. Not everyone on the six driving teams may be experienced. Some may be doing mid/sweep for the first time; this is especially true at Parade and Treffen. Some teams may not even have the luxury to do a dry run before the event. For us, I don't think many of our volunteers have been on all our tours, if any for some. Make sure your team knows what to do and what is expected of them. A sweep did not stop to assist a participant with mechanical issues; this was brought to the EC's attention after the Treffen Greenbrier event.
8. Unexpected road conditions and construction can pop up anytime, even with the best coordination. This happened at Treffen Santa Barbara on the route to the staging area and I noticed it on the Ring the Peak tour in 2019 and then the 2020 Mystery tour.

Check road conditions online prior to day of the tour (although they are not always accurate).

9. Left turns and multiple stoplights in a short span are always challenges; we need better mitigation on this.
10. Be mindful of streets with the same or similar names along the route; i.e., First Ave vs First Street (a group made a wrong turn in Treffen Vermont), passing loops on the same road with same road signs (end of Rampart Range tour), etc. Many participants are looking at directions for the first time when they get into the car and may not notice any subtle differences. If you know of such instances, emphasize it during the drivers meeting.
11. Do not assume anything or take things for granted. Make sure you conduct a safe tour.
12. Wrong turns are inevitable, find the next safe place to turnaround or reroute. Find place to stop and regroup if necessary.
13. All driving team members must sign the PCA waiver. This is either done at the welcome reception on Wednesday or first thing when you show up at the staging area. You will receive your name badge and volunteer T-shirt; both must be worn when you are on shift or at invited social events.
14. There is no food at the staging area so plan accordingly.

Tour Lead:

1. Is responsible for making sure everyone who lined up in your queue is on your list and is given a wristband.
2. The lead should maintain group integrity as much as possible. I rather see the tour safely pull off the side of the road and wait than having everyone slow down to wait for people to catch up. [IMHO and thru observation, the latter backs up other traffic and they eventually break up the group down the line.] It's best to let all participants know where places will cause the group to separate and how we plan to regroup. It is impossible to keep the group intact for the entire tour but if most arrive at the destination without anyone struggling to catch up, you've accomplished the mission.
3. You may get Mid and Sweep who have never done a tour before. Make sure you are all on the same page before leaving on the tour. Note: We will try to identify all tour driving teams before hand so everyone will at least get to review the tour directions. Tours may not have the same Mid and Sweep for both tour days.
4. Set and maintain a consistent pace. It's hard to believe but both tours we were on in Vermont were done mostly at speed limit.
5. Make sure you reiterate any danger or conditions (both driving and on foot) that may affect your participants. They should have been warned by our advertisements before the sign up.
6. Check wristbands at places requiring admission and at lunch. There are folks on self-guided tours that may not have paid for the tour and will try to get in with the group.

Mid:

1. Assist Tour Lead with any administrative tasks at the staging area.
2. The Mid car always seems to be out of position after the first and subsequent stops. Better communications and awareness between the driving team and participants before taking off are needed.

3. In the event the Sweep car has to stop to assist one of the participants, the Mid car may need to fall back and become the Sweep car.
4. As the Mid car, you are basically the Sweep car for the first group and the Lead for the second group. Make sure you have coordinated with the team on what to do when pulling into stops where there is not sufficient space for everyone to park in the same area; i.e. Decker.
5. Communicate to the team if you had gone through or stopped at a major intersection where participants did not make it through.

Sweep:

1. Help direct cars into position for his/her tour at staging. Identify all non-Porsche cars and put a sticker to the lower left side of the rear window (or a place where you will notice when passing, make sure the Mid person knows this also).
2. Assist any car that pulls out from the main group. If the car cannot continue, make certain the driver can get service before rejoining main group. Make sure you communicate with Mid car and Tour Leader (if possible).
3. Wherever possible and safe to do so, the Sweep will pull out of the back of the line to block traffic after a stop.
4. Communicate to the team if you had gone through or stopped at a major intersection where participants did not make it through.
5. Communicate to the Mid car and Tour Lead when you have caught up to the main group after being separated.

Final Thoughts: We have a great Tour program, it's becoming the standard for Treffen as most of the work we've done is being used by future Treffen chairs and Tourmeisters. We've set the bar and expectation pretty high for PCA but we are probably the best-prepared Treffen team thus far. Get to know the participants and enjoy the tours.