

# Slow riders test wits and gears at Port of Ilwaco

**L**WACO — A refrain from a classic song makes it clear that “Low riders go a little slower.”

On Friday afternoon, going a little slower is the theme as the first event of the yearly Rod Run to the End of the World kicks off with the slow drag at the Port of Ilwaco.

Sponsored by the Port of Ilwaco and the Ilwaco Merchants Association, dozens of cars compete to see whose custom machine can coast the farthest on Howerton Way.

A large crowd watches the race, the rules of which are relatively simple.

Both cars leave the starting line at the same time and accelerate to a maximum speed of 20 mph for approximately 60 feet before crossing the “coast line,” that consists of a fire hose stretched across the roadway.

After the rear wheels cross the coast line, the driver immediately puts the vehicle in neutral and allows it to coast along the road until reaching another section of fire hose at the finish line.

Use of brakes is prohibited, as is

spinning the vehicle’s tires at the start or excessively revving up the engine.

The winner is the vehicle closest to and with all four wheels across the finish line that is approximately 200 feet away.

Many of the entrants are slow drag veterans.

“This is the second time I’ve been here with this car, but I have been in the race five or six times with other cars,” said the driver of a white 1959 Cadillac four-door, with 126,000 actual miles on it. “Last year, I coasted too far and lost,” he said.

Vehicles of every description — not always “souped up” hot rods — are entered. Some recent entries have included newer vehicles including several PT Cruisers and a 2010 Chevrolet Camaro.

Family and friends also participate in the race, and pickup trucks sometimes have passengers seated in lawn chairs in the truck beds. Whether the extra weight on the vehicles helps or hinders the ability to coast is open to question.



The Slow Drag at Port of Ilwaco on Friday night of Rod Run weekend gives spectators a close-up look at beautiful classic cars in slow motion.

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