

CHEF'S RUN

The Chefs cruised through the first day of the Italy Road Rally like a juggernaut, often showing up at merchant locations even before they had set up for the clue. On the first day, they came in first of all teams to Pisa and were still in first place at their 8th clue on the second day, when they were just getting through Lari with their castle and restaurant clue. Then at about noon they hit a snag. The clue was as usual in two parts – a part that was in the clue bag, which was a box of different pasta noodles each which had to be named, the second part in the clue sheet which had eight blanks for the first letters of each pasta name (Rigatoni was an “R”). Also the last clue referenced the writer and military hero D’Annunzio, whose plaque where the clue was hidden was next to an aquifer in Volterra. The team headed instead to Livorno, on the Mediterranean, for most of us not an ideal seaside destination for a rally. Livorno had seven letters and Volterra needed eight. But the letters were very similar, and pasta can be named a number of different ways. The problem, which caused a delay of three hours, was attributable to both sides, the planners at fault for using the wrong word for designating an Italian aquifer, the Chefs at fault for not entering the correct letters of their destination, leaving one blank. If they had Googled “Volterra” and “D’Annunzio” they would have known where to go. The locals of course had no clue that the hero’s plaque was in their midst, so chatting them up in broken Italian helped no one.

Ultimately, and with some frustration, the Chefs’ time was good, but not enough to guarantee a placement. Their call for help counted as a half point penalty, consistent with many other teams that had done equally well. The first three placing teams had no flaws.