

23. Where We're Going, We Don't Need Roads: Rebelle Rally 2019

January 17, 2020

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Rachelle Croft and Taylor Pawley, winners of the 2019 Rebelle Rally, tell us about what it's like to compete in the first women's off-road navigation rally raid in the U.S.

Full transcript below.

Tyler Litchenberger: Hello, everyone. Welcome back to Toyota Untold!

Kelsey Soule: Today, we're talking about one of the most unique driving events of the year — Rebelle Rally!

Tyler Litchenberger: Created by Emily Miller, Rebelle Rally is the first women's off-road navigation rally race in the United States. Drivers join as teams of two, working together to navigate and drive across more than 2,000 kilometers of desert in Nevada and California.

Kelsey Soule: It's not a race for speed, instead challenging drivers to navigate the desert with nothing but maps and a compass, find hidden checkpoints, and cross some of the largest sand dunes in the country.

Tyler Litchenberger: And we were lucky enough to chat with Rachelle Croft & Taylor Pawley, the winners of the 2019 Rebelle Rally.

Kelsey Soule: Without further ado, let's get into our conversation with Rachelle and Taylor.

Tyler Litchenberger: First of all, Taylor and Rachelle, welcome to Toyota Untold. We are so happy to have you.

Rachelle Croft: Thank you.

Taylor Pawley: And if you haven't, like if you know ... if you've listened for like a minute to the podcast, I talk about my 2017 GX all the time. And so, you guys had a completely stock 2019 GX 460, and you took it into this rally challenge. Tell us about that, Rachelle.

Rachelle Croft: Yeah, it was such a privilege. I'm a big Toyota and Lexus fan myself. And so, when I got the call from some guys over there, if we'd be interested in driving a stock Lexus, I absolutely jumped at the chance. I love those cars, and it's such a fun way. This rally is set up in such a good way. It's ... you drive over eight days. And I think we went about 2300 kilometers. Taylor will have the exact math on that because she had her nose in that every day as I did not as closely, but it's ... it covers so much different terrain. You've got sand dunes, you've got dirt roads, you've got rock crawling. I used every single feature that the GX had to offer, and it did it flawlessly without even thinking about it. So, it was ... and it was comfortable.

Kelsey Soule: Yeah.

Rachelle Croft: I think that was the other big thing was we did it in style, and it was comfortable, and it handled everything we threw at it. It was fantastic.

Kelsey Soule: So, how did you guys get into this?

Rachelle Croft: So, I first heard about these types of rallies actually in 2011 from the creator of the Rebelle Rally, Emily Miller. And at the time, she was spreading the word to women in the US that there was a rally similar ... kind of similar rally in Morocco actually, and that really piqued my interest. I was home with three babies at the time. My husband and I had just started a web series called Expedition Overland.

So, I was really just feeling the need to get outside of my comfort zone and do something just kinda crazy, stretch my legs. And I've always loved driving. I love travel. And I heard about this rally in Morocco. And that one is nine days, women only, shortest distance wins, all maps and compasses, no GPS. And that's how I kind of got into that world and met Emily. And then, fast forward to 2016, Emily created the first Rebelle Rally, which is in the US. And then, that's where Taylor comes in.

Taylor Pawley: Yeah, so Rachelle and her current racing partner, at the time in 2016, were promoting the rally at some of the overlanding events and other kind of outdoor show type events that we tended to go to as well. So, when I signed up for one of their classes, they were teaching, which is just the navigation class. It was kind of just the basics. I had never held a compass up to that point. So, I learned from Rachelle how to use a compass for the very first time.

And then, I took their next day class, which was how to be a rally driver. And so, it was kind of an overview of what the races look like and what the experience is like. And within two weeks, I had signed up for the first Rebelle Rally, and I found myself a partner online, somebody I'd never met and didn't meet until two days before that first rally. And yeah, my inspiration in every way was Rachelle and her your partner, Rhonda. So, I was so fortunate to get to meet them and to get introduced to the world. And now, race with her.

Tyler Litchenberger: Oh my God, I can't believe you found a partner online. It's like finding your college roommate online.

Kelsey Soule: I literally did that.

Taylor Pawley: You did?

Kelsey Soule: Yeah. It's actually exactly what I was thinking of when you said that.

Taylor Pawley: It's just like that.

Tyler Litchenberger: Yeah.

Kelsey Soule: If you're going here, so I'm going to. So, can you tell us and our listeners, Rachelle, what does the race look like? Can you ... can you give a little bit more detail, so they know what goes into it? I think you mentioned some of the races, it's like no GPS, no phones. Like-

Rachelle Croft: Mm-hmm [affirmative].

Kelsey Soule: I mean, obviously, I understand a compass is involved but that doesn't do much for me. So, can you tell us what that's like?

Rachelle Croft: Yeah, for sure. So, yeah, these are actually called ... they're kind of a long-distance rally. So, you have like the Baja 1000, and you have these high-speed races. These are more long. They're kind of Enduro challenge rallies. So, the strategy is that you have to go eight or nine days. You've got to manage your energy, manage your stress, manage your vehicle because if something happens to that, you need to fix it. People aren't just going to come in and rescue you. You can call for outside assistance, but you're going to be docked points. And a lot of times your rally, you won't be usually scored, or you'll go way down in the rankings.

So, yeah. There's no GPS. We actually turn in our phones on the first day. They go through all of your electronics, and they hide or take out. Like on the GX, I have that little map SD card. They have to take that out. So, there's no map anywhere in the car. And it's completely ... they give you all of your paper maps for the whole eight days of the rally. So, Taylor had her beautiful stack of maps. And then, they give you coordinates

every day that you actually take, and you plot yourself on those maps. So, you have to make sure you do that right.

And then, throughout the day, you're going to each of those coordinates that you yourself have plotted only using maps, compasses, your common sense. And we have a little ... the only thing we put in the GX is a little rally computer, and it just counted kilometers to the exact measurement so that we can be sure if we're going 1.2 kilometers, you know, until ... for 90 degrees. And then we're turning and resetting that and going three kilometers down this road, you know. So, it's kind of that system over eight days.

Tyler Litchenberger: That's insanity. And so, wait. Is it ... are there points along the way where it's clear that like, "Oh, this is where someone has been before," or is it literally like-

Kelsey Soule: Markers or something.

Tyler Litchenberger: Yeah.

Rachelle Croft: Yeah. So, Emily has set it up kind of a lot like if you ski, it kinda correlates with that.

Kelsey Soule: Yeah.

Rachelle Croft: You've got your greens, your blues, and your blacks. Green flags are very noticeable. They're pretty easy to navigate too, I'll say, 'cause we've ... I don't want to say pretty easy 'cause we've all missed a green here and there in our lives but-

Tyler Litchenberger: Right.

Rachelle Croft: ... they're a very tall flag. So, you know, like, "Okay, there's our flag. We're in the right area."

Tyler Litchenberger: Got it.

Rachelle Croft: Blues can be a pole in the ground. So, they're going to be a little more difficult. They can be hiding behind a shrub, or a tree, or sometimes they're a flag. They might take more driving difficulty to get to. They might put it on top of a really hard off-road track or hard dune.

And then blacks actually – and this is where Taylor just astounded me every time – are not marked at all. So, you are ... you have a little GPS clicker or tracker. I don't even know what it's called. Taylor, it's the yellow brick. You would punch in when you got to that spot and it would send your coordinates to the administration, and they would check to see if you were on that black checkpoint. And we could actually replot that. Taylor would actually plot that right away and make sure.

So, it's ... the other tricky thing there is if you're first off the line that morning, there's no other cars in front of you for a while. So, you're out there leading the pack. You don't have other cars to kind of judge off of and kind of see if you're in the right spot. Maybe you are, maybe you ... maybe you're not.

Tyler Litchenberger: Right.

Rachelle Croft: It's ... you kind of get all across the board of-

Tyler Litchenberger: Tay-

Rachelle Croft: ... levels.

Tyler Litchenberger: Taylor, what is that pressure like?

Taylor Pawley: Oh, buddy. It's ... it can be really intense.

Tyler Litchenberger: Yeah.

Taylor Pawley: The cool thing about the rally is it's kinda designed for all different skill levels. So, you'll have people out there who their goal is just to finish, and they have the best time on their way to that. So, they don't take it quite as, you know, crazy serious as maybe Rachelle and I did because Rachelle and I came into it with the shared goal of, "We've both done this before, we really have all the tools, and we have an incredible vehicle. Let's win this."

So, the pressure for us and for the other teams that were competing really, really every day for that top spot, the pressure is intense and so little mistakes throughout the day. I'd say one of the ... one of the huge things that teams have to learn how to do, and Rachelle and I learned it pretty early on, is if you mess up, if you make a mistake, move on, and shake it off and get to that next checkpoint because you'll likely have 10 more in that day

Kelsey Soule: Yeah.

Taylor Pawley: And one checkpoint can't throw off your entire day.

Kelsey Soule: Can you tell us a little bit about what ... because obviously ... actually, I don't know. Did you guys ... well, you couldn't have devices, so you can't like film what it looks like, right?

Rachelle Croft: We actually were able to film a little bit.

Kelsey Soule: Okay.

Taylor Pawley: So, actually, you'll see an episode on that come out with Expedition Overland. I believe it will be episode eight. So, we had our own GoPros in the car.

Kelsey Soule: Okay.

Taylor Pawley: So, we were allowed to do some filming ourselves, which we did.

Kelsey Soule: So, if ... and we can plug where people can find Expedition ~~Overload or~~

Tyler Litchenberger: ~~Overland.~~

Kelsey Soule: Overland.

Tyler Litchenberger: Mm-hmm [affirmative].

Kelsey Soule: ... at the end. But can you tell us ... you guys went through Nevada and California, right? Can you tell us a little bit about, like, what that looks like, and then some ... some like roadblocks, maybe physically or mentally, whatever that you ran into along the way?

Rachelle Croft: Yeah, sure. I'll let you take lead on that one.

Taylor Pawley: Cool. Yeah. We had a really incredible course this year. One thing that Emily does is she makes sure each year is different than the last. We don't know what the route will be when we, you know, are going into it. And then, when we leave at the end of our route, we don't know what next year is going to be.

So, it's pretty exciting that first day to hear her say things like, "Okay, it's been four years. And now, we're finally gonna go through Death Valley." So, we got to see a lot of Death Valley, which was really cool. Some places that, you know, they don't give permits to everybody for stuff like this. So, it's ... it was pretty incredible. We drove through ... we drove to the Big Dune, which is in kind of Central Nevada on the California border, I believe. Gosh, it's hard when you're looking at a 200,000-scale map to know exactly where you are in the world. You, kind of, only have your perspective of that, just that tiny area.

Tyler Litchenberger: Right.

Taylor Pawley: So, I hope I'm right. I know it's like maybe 200 miles, maybe 300 miles more so than Vegas. So ... but that was a really cool spot, the Big Dune, and that's one of those, like you said, a roadblock. Dune driving is a big part of what they do in this rally. So, they'll always give us a dune day, kind of middle of the ... of the rally, and then at the very end as well. We always start in Lake Tahoe and end in Glamis Sand Dunes, right on the Mexico border.

So, when we get to those sand dunes, they're the largest in North America. And I hope I'm getting that fact right, but I'm pretty sure it's the largest in North America, and they are intense. So, we do a full day of driving in those dunes. And that's where somebody like Rachelle, who has a lot of experience dune driving and is an exceptionally good driver regularly, she really excels, and a lot of vehicles and a lot of people have a lot of trouble.

Kelsey Soule: So, a lot of people probably have never been to these dunes. When you say it's intense driving, obviously, you know it's like a desert-like atmosphere, but like how ... if you could guess, like how tall are-

Tyler Litchenberger: How high are you going up? Yeah.

Kelsey Soule: How high? I'm just trying to figure it, like put a mental picture with what you guys are doing.

Rachelle Croft: Oh man. I think the best way to describe that is that they actually show up on the map, and there's some peaks that are so high, you can navigate off of them 'cause they don't change. As far as height-wise goes, man, I'm so bad at this. Maybe ... I don't know. Taylor, what do you say? 500 to ... 500 to 1000 feet.

Kelsey Soule: Oh, wow.

Rachelle Croft: ... above this?

Taylor Pawley: Yeah. I would say there are some in the center that are that tall. If you guys ... your listeners will probably recognize the first ... the new set of Star Wars movies was filmed there. I'm blanking on the name. I think that was-

Tyler Litchenberger: The Rise of Skywalker?

Taylor Pawley: ... Force Awakened, that one

Tyler Litchenberger: Oh, Force Awakened, okay.

Taylor Pawley: ... was at the dunes, so.

Kelsey Soule: Wow.

Rachelle Croft: Yeah. And the hard-

Taylor Pawley: So that-

Tyler Litchenberger: I thought you were going to say like 40 feet.

Kelsey Soule: Me too. I thought it was like bumps.

Rachelle Croft: It ... and it just depends. They ... they're not gonna ... and that's the part about driving dunes that's not ... it's not just going up and over. And that's part of it, but it's finding your way through them to find a drivable route 'cause we're not in little sand buggies and ATVs. We're in full-blown vehicles.

Tyler Litchenberger: Right.

Rachelle Croft: And it takes a little more time to pick your way through those and find a safe route that's going to get you through there.

Tyler Litchenberger: So, what other vehicles besides your GX were involved in the competition? Who were you up against?

Rachelle Croft: Yeah. There's a lot of really cool rigs in here. It's so fun that first day when you show up, and there's all these women, and all of these just amazing rigs.

Tyler Litchenberger: Yeah.

Rachelle Croft: You've got Toyota FJS, old Toyota trucks, Landcruiser. There's ... there was a Land Rover. There was even a Rolls Royce in the crossover class. Subarus. The Ford Raptor, Nissan, Honda.

Tyler Litchenberger: Everybody. Everybody's involved.

Taylor Pawley: Yeah. I think, you ... you mostly got them there. Yes, so.

Tyler Litchenberger: That's crazy.

Taylor Pawley: Land Rover, you get them. Yeah.

Kelsey Soule: So, when it comes to the rigs, as you call them, do ... are all of them like stock, or all of them souped up, or done, or had like aftermarket things added to them, or is it ... is there other requirements as it pertains to the car?

Rachelle Croft: Yeah, you're ... there's a wide variety. So, if you want to do, they call it the bone stock designation, which is what we did, you can take a stock rig. And if it's a ... they've got a four ... a 4×4 class, and then a crossover class. And 4x4s, if you have that low range transfer case, that's considered a 4×4. Crossover, you don't have that low range transfer case.

Kelsey Soule: Right.

Rachelle Croft: So, you are allowed to take basically any vehicle that fits in that requirement. And then, if you have added suspension and tires, skid plates, bumpers, you're just going to be in a general 4×4 class without that bone stock designation. So, Taylor and I were allowed to put different tires on the GX, and we put a roof rack on the top, and that was the only modification we were allowed to stay in that bone stock designation.

Kelsey Soule: So, bone stock is, literally, you bought it off the lot.

Taylor Pawley: Yup.

Tyler Litchenberger: Sure.

Kelsey Soule: Got it.

Rachelle Croft: Exactly.

Tyler Litchenberger: So, you said that you used a lot of features from the GX in this. And it's funny because I always will tell my friends, I'm like, "Well, it's ... it's a top five luxury off-road vehicle," but I don't do a lot of off-roading in my GX. Maybe over a curb here and there. What are the features that you use and, like, how did it perform?

Rachelle Croft: Oh, man. So, I use ... so, this, we had a luxury edition GX, which was hilarious.

Tyler Litchenberger: Same.

Rachelle Croft: It was really fun to be out there.

Tyler Litchenberger: Awesome.

Rachelle Croft: And so, we ... we definitely use all the creature comforts. We had a couple really cold mornings, and we would joke with everyone. We're like, "Yeah, we're going to turn on our heated seats and [crosstalk] heated steering wheel, and, you know, go throughout the day.

Tyler Litchenberger: Of course, yeah.

Rachelle Croft: But on the off-road side, we ... it had the airbag suspension in the back to where we could actually raise it a couple inches to get that extra clearance if we needed.

Tyler Litchenberger: Yeah.

Rachelle Croft: So, there was a day through an open OHV area that I definitely had to use that to crawl through some crazy, crazy rotted out roads.

Kelsey Soule: Sorry. What's OHV?

Taylor Pawley: Off-highway vehicle.

Kelsey Soule: Oh, okay.

Rachelle Croft: Nice. I learned something new today,

Taylor Pawley: I believe ... I believe that's how they ... yeah, an off-highway vehicle park-

Kelsey Soule: Okay.

Taylor Pawley: ... is what they're usually designated as.

Kelsey Soule: Got it.

Taylor Pawley: So, there are areas where you can drive where there are not roads.

Tyler Litchenberger: Interesting.

Taylor Pawley: So, if you ... if you are ... like a lot of these areas, like a BLM area or something, they want you to stay on designated trails, but when you get into open OHV ... and the difference is open versus just OHV, but open OHV like Johnson Valley, which is a premier location, everybody knows it from King of Hammers, which is a huge competition that happens every year in the off-road industry. So, places like Johnson Valley, when you get there, you can drive anywhere. It doesn't have to be on a road. So, they'll put a checkpoint in the middle of, you know, the top of a feature that's there, you know, a little mountain. And there might be a road there, or there might be just a trail that kind of looks like maybe somebody has driven up it, but it's not necessarily a road.

Tyler Litchenberger: Right.

Kelsey Soule: Gotcha.

Taylor Pawley: And you can take the shortest distance if you want. You don't have to stick to the roads. Although in Johnson Valley, you probably want to stick to a road as much as possible.

Tyler Litchenberger: Awesome. So, like in the sand, what ... what do you have to do when you're going up a 500-foot sand dune, like how do you navigate that?

Rachelle Croft: That's ... yeah, that's a great question. You go ... you navigate that very, very slowly. And Taylor and I were working on that 'cause that was one thing. Just, I've done the Morocco rally three times and were ... literally, you crossed the Sahara Desert, and you're crossing these massive Chigaga Dunes. So, I got to have a lot of practice figuring out how to navigate through there and drive through dunes.

And so, Taylor, she's done ... she's done Rebelle twice. So, this was her third year, which was awesome. So, we were able to kind of combine our skills and pick our way through, but it's literally, you're getting out, and it's distance, and heading all day long, especially that day we were there, there was a sand ... sandstorm the day before, we couldn't really see the mountains. Could we, Taylor? I'm trying to remember.

Taylor Pawley: No. Uh-uh [negative]. Not at all.

Tyler Litchenberger: My goodness.

Rachelle Croft: Yeah. So, you have no back ... you have no features like out in the distance that you-

Tyler Litchenberger: Right.

Rachelle Croft: ... can kind of reference. It was just dune. So, you really have to rely on your compass and your distance. Although in the dunes, your distance, you can't drive a straight line. It's pretty much impossible. So, we ... she was so methodical about, "Okay, we're going 342 degrees over there, over that hill. That's the dune we're headed towards." And then, I would take us there as closely as possible. And we were able to work with some other women that day too, which was amazing.

So, we all would kind of make our way there, and she would be making little ticks on the map as we went. "360 degrees. Okay. I think we've gone probably 0.3 kilometers. We should be right here on the map. And we just did that over and over. It was... it's painstakingly slow-

Kelsey Soule: Yeah.

Rachelle Croft: ... but it's a lot faster than getting lost.

Kelsey Soule: For sure

Tyler Litchenberger: Yeah.

Rachelle Croft: So, you just got to kind of slow everything down that day.

Taylor Pawley: And this particular track that Rachelle's referencing was what they call the technical section. And it was some of the most intense driving either of us had ever done in the dunes. It was absolutely technical. and we were very fortunate to have gone in to this section with a couple other vehicles and experienced drivers because, man, it's ... having to try to do it alone would have been very daunting.

But yeah, it's a lot of just ... we would ... we would go 200 meters, and then I would have to take a heading what distance we just or where we came from. So, I check the direction we came from, so I could reference exactly where we had gone. And then, I would make that note. And then, I would say, "Okay, we're going in that general direction. Pick your line." And then I would do the same thing once we stop, and look back behind us, we'll get what direction we had gone and mark that on the map. So, yeah, it was very methodical work and very intense driving.

Kelsey Soule: I think my question is how does the car drive through the sand, honestly, because I really don't get it? I mean like, did you have to have certain settings to make it go up the dunes with sand moving, and if it's like a sandstorm or, you know, like what features of the car did you use aside from, obviously, your guys' knowledge of how to physically get to where you're going to get through this terrain.

Rachelle Croft: Yeah, that's a great question. So, the first thing we do is air down our tires to about 16 pounds of pressure. And that actually kind of makes you float on top of the sand instead of bearing you down in it.

Kelsey Soule: Good to know.

Rachelle Croft: So, right away, you want to ... if you're ever doing sand driving, you want to air down your tires [crosstalk] finding a sweet spot-

Kelsey Soule: If you're ever stuck in the sand.

Rachelle Croft: ... in the morning, the sand is going to be firmer. So, it's a lot easier to drive, whereas, during the day, as it heats up, it's going to get softer, and it's a lot easier to get stuck. So, honestly, usually, when I drive dunes, I have it in four low, and I'm in like fourth gear for low. But with the GX, it had so much, I guess, high-end power that I actually found it easier to do it in just regular four-wheel drive.

Tyler Litchenberger: Interesting.

Rachelle Croft: So, I was in first, second gear all day long, and that was the only thing I did was air down tires, pop it for second gear, and it just went. It-

Kelsey Soule: Nice.

Rachelle Croft: It did all of it that I asked it to do.

Kelsey Soule: So that's nice because you guys don't have so much to worry about outside of how the vehicle operates. So, as long as you basically do those basic functions that you know from experience, then the car moving is the last thing that you have to worry about.

Rachelle Croft: Yup. And it definitely ... you know, I ... she didn't come out totally unscathed. She had a few little tweaks to the front fender.

Kelsey Soule: Tweaks.

Rachelle Croft: But-

Kelsey Soule: Slight modifications.

Taylor Pawley: It wasn't Rachelle's fault. That bush really got in the way.

Tyler Litchenberger: Right.

Kelsey Soule: I mean, for what you guys were doing. I feel like it makes sense that it wouldn't come out looking exactly like it did when it went in.

Tyler Litchenberger: Right.

Rachelle Croft: Yeah. But my goal was to not rip. I was like, we're going to take this car to the whole rally. It will still have side steps, and it will still have the bumper intact. It's all going to be in one piece when I return this car, and did a pretty good job-

Taylor Pawley: Well, that was because ... sorry. That was partly because somebody on the ... there's a GX ... GXOR Facebook group-

Kelsey Soule: Yeah.

Taylor Pawley: ... with over 10,000 members, and they got wind of what we were doing right before the rally started when we still had our phones. And there were a lot of people who were kind of like, "Oh, yeah, you're going to rip those bumpers right off, and you're going to rip those side ... side steps off. And we were like, "No, we aren't." So, [crosstalk] .

Kelsey Soule: Yeah. We actually ... we did an overlanding episode this season where we talked ... we talked to some people that ... that participated in overlanding events, and they talked about the community on Facebook for the Lexus GX. And it's so cool that ... I mean, 'cause some people don't even know that all of ... all of these things exist

Tyler Litchenberger: Right.

Kelsey Soule: Like overlanding and all of these rallies. And it's so cool that you guys have a community to connect with for people that like the same thing.

Tyler Litchenberger: And not just that. I think rally is just for women.

Rachelle Croft: It's an amazing support from that community. They were just so excited to see a ... see us in a GX out there. It was awesome.

Tyler Litchenberger: So, you said that when you go out with people, the technical course, do you guys help each other out or, for me, I'm so competitive. I'd be like pure race. I'm out. The rest of you can catch up. How do ... what is the community like on the race?

Kelsey Soule: Please don't add Tyler to your-

Tyler Litchenberger: Yeah, don't add ... don't add me.

Taylor Pawley: Probably, the best thing about competing in an all-women's rally is when I describe it to people, I always say that I race with everyone, and I've had people who have to ask me like, "Wait a second. Who was your partner? Because you say you raced with like 30 different people. What are you talking about?" And I-

Tyler Litchenberger: Right.

Taylor Pawley: So, I know that just the way I come out of it thinking is that we all did this together. So, there's ... you will have your team of two, and you have all of the other teams that you're competing against, but at the end of the day, you're all just trying to get back to base camp, and you're all just trying to find the next checkpoint. And it doesn't even matter if you're a top team or if you're competing for that, you know, 10th place spot, you are still out there to help each other. And it's a really cool feeling that I feel like Emily Miller has done a lot to create, the creator of the rally. She has kind of fostered that there is competition, but that it's not at the expense of everybody else's rally. So, it's a really cool feeling to do it all together.

Rachelle Croft: Yeah. And that ... and on dune days, you're actually allowed to work together in teams. So, you can drive together, you can follow each other; whereas, other days of the rally, you are not allowed to follow each other for obvious reasons-

Tyler Litchenberger: Right.

Rachelle Croft: ... and kind of navigate together and all that stuff. You can help each other out. But dune day is a totally different animal. And a lot of that is for safety reasons too. It's a lot safer to go through, at least, with two cars in case you get stuck or it's ... it can get gnarly out there. So, that's one of the fun things is getting to bond together, and navigate together, and pick lines together. And if someone gets stuck, you've got two other ... you've got, you know, for other women there digging ... digging each other out, and you're on your way. So, it's a pretty cool thing.

Kelsey Soule: Awesome. So, I think that one thing that we as a company really value from participating in these groups and the overlanding community is that we get feedback directly from the people that drive the vehicles in these scenarios on how we can make our vehicles better. So, do you guys have any ... any thoughts on, like what would you do to the GX to make it better for your race, or do you think it was, you know, a perfect fit?

Tyler Litchenberger: Stock was fine.

Kelsey Soule: Stock, yeah.

Rachelle Croft: Whoa, man. I will-

Taylor Pawley: That is a tough question.

Rachelle Croft: That is tough. It did so well.

Taylor Pawley: I think the one thing I missed with this vehicle was just having a little more clearance. So-

Kelsey Soule: Yeah.

Tyler Litchenberger: Yeah.

Taylor Pawley: ... I spent a lot of time driving pickups and larger vehicles, and that having that little bit of extra clearance, especially for some of the driving that we were doing during the rally would have been great. But we did, when we axed those general tires gain about two inches of clearance, which was definitely helpful. And having that ... the air suspension when we needed it in the back, raising that up just a little bit definitely was awesome to have.

Tyler Litchenberger: So, what happens next after you win this rally? Where do you go from here?

Taylor Pawley: I was like, "That soon?"

Tyler Litchenberger: Yeah. Do you just ... do you just wait for a little bit, and you're like, "All right, family time," or you're like, "No, we got to go out and win the next one"?

Rachelle Croft: I've had a mix of all those feelings right now because you are. It's like you're on this high with all of these women for eight days. You have the awards ceremony, and then you get home, and everybody's excited. And then, there's definitely just this kind of let down. You're like, "Okay. I'm a mom running a business. Did that. And that was really cool." And you are. Like, especially for me, I'm always looking, "Well, what's next?" The cool thing with winning this rally is we get our next year's entry. So, we can go back next year. If Lexus wants to do it again, we're all about it. So, the Rebelle only comes once a year. It's in October. They've announced dates already for 2020. It will be their fifth year. And I think they're gonna plan some pretty cool stuff.

Kelsey Soule: Nice.

Rachelle Croft: But there are some other cool rallies and races around the world. This is ... there's a Sonora rally. I believe that's in ... when is that? February? March? Taylor?

Taylor Pawley: April?

Rachelle Croft: I'm actually going to send you that-

Taylor Pawley: Or May.

Rachelle Croft: Check this one out.

Tyler Litchenberger: All right.

Taylor Pawley: Definitely, yeah. There are a lot of cool events that happen around the world that we're definitely keeping on our radar, and we are definitely back for the Rebelle next year, for sure.

Kelsey Soule: Awesome. That's great to hear that you guys are keeping the community going 'cause I think ... and you ... you mentioned earlier, so I want to make sure that we can plug it for everybody that you guys took some footage that people would be able to watch on Expedition Overland. So, how can people watch that if they want to?

Rachelle Croft: Yeah, great question. That's on YouTube right now. We've just started releasing our new season and episode, it will be coming out in episode eight.

Kelsey Soule: Okay. So, the-

Rachelle Croft: And-

Kelsey Soule: Expedition Overland on YouTube.

Rachelle Croft: Yes, ma'am.

Kelsey Soule: Got it. Awesome.

Tyler Litchenberger: I'm watching. I'm doing it. I'm going to take my GX.

Taylor Pawley: [Crosstalk]

Rachelle Croft: You got to get out there.

Kelsey Soule: My gosh.

Rachelle Croft: I think you're competitive. You need to go out there.

Tyler Litchenberger: I am so competitive. It's about silly things, but ... and I love to drive. I am embarking on a 12-hour drive in the GX with a mother-in-law, and two kids, and two dogs starting tomorrow. So that should be good to-

Rachelle Croft: harder than anything we did.

Tyler Litchenberger: Yeah. Yes. And the mother-in-law, I think is the toss up there.

Kelsey Soule: So, if ... if people are interested in getting involved in this community, I know that you guys mentioned that there's some classes that you've taken to prepare yourself for these races. How do they ... what's the best way for them to get involved?

Rachelle Croft: Yeah. There's ... so, if you go right to rebellerally.com, their website has a lot of information.

Kelsey Soule: Okay.

Rachelle Croft: There's also a lot of Rebelle Rally Facebook groups on Facebook, and it's a great community of women. Usually, at the overlanding events, you've got Overland Expo West, Northwest Overland Rally. There will be Rebelle Rally classes going on during those events. I will probably be teaching one at some point with Taylor. And Taylor, what else? Am I missing anything?

Taylor Pawley: Yeah. I would say following the overlanding groups always helps. I'm ... I run a community of women that overlands internationally, as well as in the States. So, Women Overlanding the World, we have some resources as well for people that are more interested in the general overlanding information, but as well as about Rebelle Rally stuff.

And yeah, I would say, the Rebelle is really great about doing trainings. They actually require for first-year people that you have done one of their driving trainings and one of their navigation training, and they usually combine those into one weekend event, so you don't have to take two weekends out of your year of prepping.

Tyler Litchenberger: Nice.

Taylor Pawley: So, they'll host those. And generally, they'll do them where, you know, like in the Glamis Sand Dunes, so you have a chance to do some dune driving and some navigating. And they'll bring some really skilled people in to teach those classes and give some information. So, those are really valuable ways to learn some skills, even if you haven't registered yet.

Kelsey Soule: Awesome.

Tyler Litchenberger: Perfect. All right. Well, Rachelle and Taylor, thank you so much for joining Toyota Untold. And congratulations on your win.

Kelsey Soule: Yeah, that's awesome.

Rachelle Croft: Thank you.

Taylor Pawley: Thank you so much for having us.

Rachelle Croft: Thank you so much.

Kelsey Soule: Wow. I love those girls.

Tyler Litchenberger: And I can't wait to test my GX in the desert!

Kelsey Soule: That sounds so fun. If you want to see what their trek was like, you can watch Expedition Overland on YouTube. The Rebelle Rally is featured in S4 EP8, "Dreams Made Real" And you will find a link to that episode in the show notes

Tyler Litchenberger: You can also follow all of Rachelle's driving on Instagram @rachelle underscore croft – that's r-a-c-h-e-l-l-e-underscore-c-r-o-f-t

And you can follow Taylor on Instagram @Taylor.Pawley — that's t-a-y-l-o-r-period-p-a-w-l-e-y.

Kelsey Soule: If you enjoy the podcast, please give us your feedback. Hit subscribe, give us five stars on Apple Podcast, and email us your comments at podcast@toyota.com.

Tyler Litchenberger: And if you want to talk to me on social media, make sure you tag @Toyota on Twitter and Facebook, and tag @ToyotaUSA on Instagram.

Bye. We'll talk to you again soon!