

Setting The Rain Streak Record(s) Straight – Again---- Ref. KomoNews.Com



SEATTLE - No rain on Sunday in Seattle means our famous streak ended at 27 straight days of rain -- good for second-longest streak of all time. Or, did the streak end?

There still seems to be a lot of confusion over how the streak is measured, as we got a handful of e-mail wondering how the streak could have ended since it rained at their house on Sunday and that the record chase should still be on.

The "official" streak measurement place for Seattle is at Sea-Tac Airport. The airport has to measure 0.01" of rain or more between midnight and 11:59 p.m. to count as a "rainy day". Trace amounts do not count as a measurable amount and are considered the same as a "dry day".

Despite some showers running around Sunday, none of them hit the airport, which recorded 0 rainfall for the day, thus ending the streak at 27 days.

Now, while it rained in other places, we can't count that for Seattle, because otherwise, it'd be comparing apples and oranges. It's possible that while, for instance, it rained in Westport and Issaquah, it might not have rained there during other days of the streak.

For example, the streak barely survived in Seattle on Jan. 4, where it only rained for 41 minutes in the early morning, but was enough to register 0.01" of rain. Many other cities were dry that day.

Plus, the record of 33 days is for Sea-Tac Airport, so we have to stay consistent on where we measure the rain. (Incidentally, Boeing Field -- actually in the city limits of Seattle -- also didn't measure any rain Sunday.)

Some Streaks *Are* Still Going

So, we all know now that Seattle's streak stopped, but there are a few other cities with official National Weather Service reporting stations that still have their streaks going.

Both Olympia and Shelton had rain on Sunday, as well as on Dec. 18 (a day earlier than Seattle), so their streak is at 30 days and counting. Apparently, Olympia's record is the same as Seattle's: 33 days set in 1953. So they could still break that record. Shelton's record has not been determined.

And another illustration of why it's difficult to peg streaks for every city -- Tacoma both has a streak and doesn't, depending on where you live.

The city has two reporting stations -- one at the Tacoma Narrows Airport and the other at McChord Air Force Base. The streak at the Narrows Airport actually ended Saturday, but McChord got rain both Saturday and Sunday, so their streak is at 29 days.

Also, Forks is at 29 days and counting as well. No word on their record.

Speaking Of Records...

In case you're curious, in the state of Washington, the record is 55 days set in Centralia in the winter of 1996-97.

In the Lower 48, Oregon holds the record for most consecutive wet days. From Dec. 7, 1997, through Feb. 23, 1998, Otis, Ore., on the central Pacific coast, recorded 79 straight days of rain.

I also found a recent article in the USA Today that says Ketchikan, Alaska had a streak of 101 days set in 1953 -- the same year Seattle's 33-day streak was set. Just for grins, I checked Ketchikan's current weather, and sure enough, they too are on a rainy streak. But theirs is only at 21 days through Sunday.

Then, an article in the Associated Press out Friday quoting the National Weather Service says there was a streak of 247 straight rainy days at Kaneohe Ranch on the island of Oahu from Aug. 27, 1993 through April 30, 1994. But I'm not sure that should really count -- that's technically in the city of Kailua, I'm told, but it's near a rain forest. For that matter, I'll bet our own

Olympic Rain Forest probably has some impressive streaks of its own, I just don't know what they are.

The Record Is 33 Days For Seattle -- Really!

We're still getting a lot of curious or skeptical e-mail from people who remember the rainy winter of 1998-1999 and swear we had 90 straight days of rain then.

But that record that gained so much fame then was that we had 90 days of rain in the 120-day period from Nov. 1, 1998-Feb. 28, 1999. But the 90 days were not consecutive. There were full on sunny days in mid November, early January and in early March. The longest stretch of consecutive days of rain in that period was a paltry 18 days.

Now, apparently, the Associated Press put out an article on March 1 that stated the record set was 90 consecutive days of rain, but then later put out a correction to the record stated above.

It's possible some news outlets didn't catch the correction and may have erroneously reported the streak at 90 straight days. But there were a handful of full on, sunny not-a-cloud-in-the-sky days mixed in during that winter (Nov. 17, Jan. 2, to name two. There was also another one in early March), so nowhere in Washington had 90 straight days of rain.

The official record is still 33 days, set in early 1953.

Could We Break That 90 Days Of Rain Record?

We'd have to stay incredibly rainy to top that record of 90 days of rain in 120 days. Right now, through Monday, Jan. 16, Seattle had 51 days of rain among the 77 since Nov. 1. That means to tie the record of 90 days before Feb. 28, it'd have to rain on the next 39 of 43 days.

That'll be tough to do, but I suppose it's possible. Remember, we had some long dry stretches in November and December that's going to make breaking this record a challenge.

How Much Rain Fell During The Record 1953 Streak?

It was 13.92". Seattle received 13.22" of rain during its 27 day streak this winter.

Seattle did set the record for rainiest 25 day stretch between Dec. 19 and Jan. 13 with 12.41", breaking the previous record of 12.16" set between Nov. 19 and Dec. 13 in 1998.

So Seattle's Back At 1: Will Olympia Hit 33?

It's possible that while Seattle lost its chance to get the record, there is rain in the forecast all week to where Olympia could break their record. In the meantime, Seattle should be pushing 6 or 7 by next weekend.