



THE NEWSLETTER OF THE BLUEGRASS CYCLING CLUB

# OUTSPOKEN

Volume 33 — July-August 2004 — Number 4

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### **Hydration and cramping -- Dr. Prince tells all**

*Wes Prince, M.D.*

This is a rather broad topic, but I will attempt to condense the material to hopefully provide enough practical information to improve your overall cycling comfort and performance. Please feel free to contact me via e-mail or on rides for a "curbside consult" if you have any questions. Last week I attended a national sports medicine conference. My favorite lecture was one given on cramping. Since I've had a few memorable experiences with this little demon, it is a topic near and dear to my heart.

How a cyclist should approach hydration depends on many variables. For a recreational cyclist that rarely exceeds 1-2 hours of moderate effort, you should primarily consume water. Consider bringing along a small bottle of Gatorade or similar low cost electrolyte solution for particularly hot days, or 1.5 - 2 hour efforts. Start replenishing your carbohydrate stores within 30 minutes of ending your ride (the sooner the better). A banana, pretzels, graham crackers or similar healthy snack along with a cool drink stored in the car for the ride home will start to replenish your glycogen stores during the best window of opportunity. The cells will most aggressively absorb and store carbohydrates during this golden half hour to hour after the ride. I typically mix up a recovery concoction that I leave in the car inside a lunch cooler with blue ice.

Stronger efforts, longer distances, humid and/or hot conditions will require a more complex plan in order to optimize performance. The old outdoorsman adage of "eat before you are hungry, and drink before you are thirsty"

will serve you well in cycling. First, you should take a good look at what you are doing now. The best reasonable way to measure body fluid status is urine output. Quite simply, if you are not urinating every 4 to 5 hours, you are probably dry, unless you are retaining fluid abnormally due to a medical problem. Buy a bathroom scale, and make it a habit to check your weight before and after rides. The difference is reflected in fluid lost (2.2 lbs for every quart / liter). Pre-ride hydration is especially important in hot humid weather. It is difficult to pre-hydrate for morning rides (drink a glass of water before bed), but for afternoon rides make it a habit to drink water fairly frequently until about 3 hours before the ride (which will allow time to get rid of the excess). The goal should be to maintain a state of adequate hydration on a daily basis. This will optimize your performance during the ride, but equally important it will improve your ability to maximize fat metabolism and recover between efforts. If you are not getting up to urinate at least once while sleeping, you are not adequately hydrated. Caffeine is a diuretic; therefore it impairs your ability to remain hydrated. I do not recommend its use, especially in hot humid climates like our summers. Make it a habit to keep water handy for sipping throughout the day.

Ask ten cyclists, exercise physiologists, and coaches what you should be consuming on the bike besides water and you will get 30 different answers! I will keep my advice here very simple because quite frankly, there is little evidence to support any particular product over another. Any effort beyond that mentioned above requires a bit more complex approach than Gatorade and Snickers. More expensive electrolyte concoctions contain blends of simple and complex carbohydrates, electrolytes, buffers for lactate, etc. They all claim miracles and the bottom line is that they are better than Gatorade, but it would be hard to prove that one is clearly superior to another. My approach I think is rather unique. Since I do not know which is better, I tend to mix several different brands based on my hunches and taste. My thinking is that if one is superior, I'll get at least some of it in my bottle! You will see me at the store pouring my top secret mix in the bottle with ice. I pre-mix the appropriate amount for one bottle and store it in little baggies which I carry in my pockets. Cool fluid is more readily absorbed

and will help cool the core on hot days. It is my opinion that the small cost of a bag of ice is well worth keeping an ice cold drink on a hot day and will at least somewhat improve my performance. Insulated bottles (Polar) and Camelbaks packed with ice will maintain a cold drink for 1-2 hours on most summer days.

Cramping can be a huge problem for some cyclists. It's a bigger problem for southern football players during "two a days" in August and that is where most of our cramping research comes from. Our most recent data suggests that the problem is much more complex than you would guess. Factors in relative order importance include muscle fatigue (effort at hand related to fitness), sodium levels, ATP availability (directly related to glycogen availability), hydration, and probably a host of other less important factors. Some folks are much more prone to cramping. Those with sickle cell trait (not the disease) have been known to develop a crisis state from athletic efforts similar to that seen fairly frequently in those with the disease. Prevalence of sickle cell trait is 1:12 African Americans and 1:413 Caucasians. Next are the folks that sweat copiously (with a relative high sodium loss). If you sweat much more than the next person in similar conditions, you will be more prone to cramping.

Most of us who cramp know that we will most likely get them during extreme efforts. Races, hard group rides where you are barely hanging on during a hot day are prime scenarios. When you are going hard, it is hard to drink, fluid will absorb slowly, and that is when you need it the most! Camelbaks help, but unless you put an electrolyte solution in the bag (making it difficult to keep clean) you will not get enough salt. The weekend before the Horsey I was going particularly hard on the Keeneland ride to hang on to the fast group. I knew from Ironworks on that I was near cramping. Finally, I dropped off when my legs blew, and I cruised in. The legs were still in a very sensitive state as I discovered 10 minutes later when I attempted to bunny hop the rail crossing. The sudden hard effort to hop caused an immediate severe cramp in one calf. It took nearly a week to get over that one. If you cramp, stop, gently massage and stretch the tight muscle to coax relaxation.

Attempting to ride it out will cause further injury. Find some salty fluid and consume mass quantities.

If you sweat heavily, or if your skin is salty after a ride, you need more sodium than others. I would start out with an extra salt tablet or to teaspoon of salt for each electrolyte bottle you consume during high sweat conditions. Late in the ride, you may want to increase your sodium intake even more. When you check the chemistry panel of athletes as they cramp, you will almost always see low sodium. Bear in mind that you can eat salt like candy and given the right conditions you will still cramp, but the idea is to reduce the likelihood for a given effort.

It takes hours for the body to absorb and equally distribute water and electrolytes across the three fluid compartments (inside cells, outside cell, inside blood vessels). You cannot correct severe dehydration or electrolyte depletion in a short time by simply drinking a large amount of water or electrolytes. IV saline is frequently used in athletic events as the treatment of choice for dehydration and cramping. The gut can only absorb a limited amount at a time, especially when there is a state of physiologic shunting of blood away from the gut. This exists during periods of high effort activity, heat stress, or severe dehydration. Maintaining adequate hydration on a daily basis will minimize the risk of dehydration during difficult conditions.

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### **Bluegrass Cycling Club**

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The Bluegrass Cycling Club is affiliated with the League of American Bicyclists, the United States Cycling Federation, the Rails to Trails Conservancy, the National Off-Road Bicycle Association, the Adventure Cycling Association, the International Mountain Bicycling Association and the Randonneurs Mondiaux.

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### **BCC time trial series continues**

*Woodson Smith*

The 2004 edition of the BCC-Pedal Power time trial series continues through August:

July 14 Lexington, Bethel Loop. First rider goes at 6:30 p. m. Meet on Bethel along the interstate, and please park on the interstate side of Bethel. One lap is about 4 miles; you'll have your choice of doing 3 or 4 laps.

July 28 Richmond, Tate's Creek Road course. Choice of 10- or 20-mile routes. The start-finish is at Kit Carson Elementary School on Tate's Creek Road. The first rider goes at 6:30 p.m. (To get to Kit Carson Elementary School, take I-75 to the Hardee's Richmond exit, turn right at the top of the ramp, and take a left at the light. Go down the hill to the "T" intersection-that's Tate's Creek Road. Go left, and the school will be on your left in less than a mile.)

August 11 Lexington, Bethel Loop

Dan Morris at Pedal Power Bike Shop is in charge of the time trial series. E-mail your questions to him at [danielmorris@insightbb.com](mailto:danielmorris@insightbb.com).

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### **F#\$(%#)\$\*g scary**

*Jason Kazee*

All right, Damiano Cunego is without doubt the scariest cyclist on the planet right now. A ripe and wise 22 years old and he just won his first Giro d'Italia in convincing fashion. This kid deserved to win. While all the favorites were either struggling to find their winning form (ahem, Mr. Garzelli), or marking the Italian press favorites (ahem, Mr. Popovych), Cunego rampaged across the Italian countryside at every opportunity. Whenever the road tipped skyward, Damiano accelerated to the clouds and dropped everyone in his wake-including his former team leader, Gilberto Simoni.

Now the 87th edition of the Giro d' Italia was very entertaining-at least when mountains were significantly involved. While Alessandro Petacchi's speed is certainly impressive and Freddy Rodriguez's fortuitous win was very nice to finally see, the long flat days in-between the mountain stages were fairly predictable. Anytime one rider wins nine total stages, the race is a moot point. But this four week spread between the end of the Giro and the commencement of the Tour de France is going to be equally entertaining.

One of the saddest sights to see is that of the team leader not quite meeting the team's expectations. In most cases, a team entering a three-week Grand Tour with aspirations for winning the overall classification does so by bringing its star rider to the race to repeat past feats of glory, or finally justify hyped expectations. But time marches on and waits for no one. I still remember clearly the day Greg LeMond struggled in the mountains of France while the race left him

behind. LeMond was "forced" to defend himself against an overzealous fan. Preserving his flycasting hand, LeMond held out his left fist while crawling up a climb which the ever-so-bold fan simply ran into. The year was 1991 and LeMond proceeded to finish in what was then his worst Tour performance ever-seventh. Gilberto Simoni should remember this tactic.

Not only was this Giro Simoni's to lose, it was supposed to be his launching pad for a much-delayed tango with everyone's favorite Texan, Mr. Armstrong, this coming July. However, Gilberto spent this Giro sitting in the front row of the race, watching his young protégé Cunego march off to win his first maglia rosa (that's "pink jersey" to you and me). As the roads went up, Simoni was in the front with the best in the race, but couldn't match Cunego's accelerations. Much like Lance himself, Cunego "took the race to his enemies" even when he supposedly was setting up Simoni, and nobody could follow. This race played out very much like the 1997 Tour de France when defending champion Bjarne Riis was forced into shepherding a young Jan Ullrich through the perils of France into his first yellow jersey. The form just wasn't quite the same as last year, and the team decided to go with the younger rider in hopes of establishing a new dynasty in cycling rather than bringing the precocious youngster back in line with seniority.

The tifosi devoured this rivalry, and the press only fanned the flames. Rumor has it Simoni called Cunego a "bastard, and stupid idiot" after the kid forced the pace up the final climb and then possessed to the gall to actually win stage 19 in response to Simoni's previous attacks during the day. The war of words, if even only in reporter's minds, has already begun and now everyone expects Simoni will depart from the ranks of the mighty Saeco squad to lead a team himself in this year's Tour.

If this is in fact true, Simoni sees the writing on the wall. Division I professional teams are always on the hunt for the next best thing. The fact that Saeco seemingly already has the next best thing in their ranks and he is currently ten years junior to Gilberto, only cements the reality around Simoni. He has peaked far too late in his career, never

become a serious threat to Armstrong in the Tour, and the best minds in the sport are starting to believe his best races are behind him. Saeco believes they have an Armstrong-killer (or at the very least an heir apparent) in their midst and will reward this young Italian handsomely in order to fulfill his promise flying their colors.

It's a hard truth to accept but Simoni is being forced to reckon with it. Having barely fallen so graciously from the top of the Italian ranks of pro cycling in only a year, it can't be easy. And probably the worst part is that Simoni still possesses the talent to ride with the best. He has just slowed ever-so-slightly. However, it just seems that during this Giro, he no longer can ride away with the panache he demonstrated so easily last year. The protégé, at least for now, has become the master and it's the master's turn to take a back seat. Hopefully the Americans who avoided this year's Giro were reviewing their Tivo recordings on a daily basis and know this Cunego kid is going to be something special. The only question now is when will that be?

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### **HH tidbits**

*Bill Daniels*

The BCC enjoyed putting on Horsey Hundred 2004! We had 1,359 riders participate. We had 125 volunteers participate.

Riders came from 28 states, plus the District of Columbia and Canada.

Top Five States Plus: Ohio (451), Kentucky (434), Indiana (142), Michigan (127), Illinois (93), Canada (17)

Horsey was 56.65% men and 43.35% women (say what!?).

Saturday was GORGEOUS! Sunday was NOT so gorgeous. Had a flood of people eat lunch at Midway College. 17 people rode their bike out to Cane Ridge Meeting House... in the rain. Nine drove their cars.

The BCC jerseys arrived the day before HH-whew-and were well received. People went home happy...some wetter than others, but still happy.

An actual e-mail: "I really appreciate all you do to make the Horsey one of the best....all those people who work so hard and are so gracious and friendly. I wish all the events could be as well run as this one."

BCC's teamwork pays off!



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### **BCC's got a new storage unit**

*Bill Daniels*

New BCC Storage Unit? That's right! The BCC has moved its worldly possessions to a new storage unit.

We're still at the same location off Stone Road there at Space Center Storage in Lexington, but we've moved to a new building and into a new unit with twice the space. The passcode to get onto the property is the same, as is our actual padlock key...so no change there.

What has changed is the key to get into the new building. So, if you have a key to the old building #12, you will need to exchange it for a new key. Contact Robert Underwood at [rgunderwoodjr@qx.net](mailto:rgunderwoodjr@qx.net) / 859-333-8416 if you need a new key.

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### **HH volunteer raffle winners**

*Bill Daniels*

Congratulations!

Congratulations go out to Tom Walters and Britney Hulette! They are the winners of the volunteer raffle drawing sponsored by Scheller's Fitness and Cycling Shop.

Each will receive a \$50 complete bicycle tune-up coupon.

Way to go, and thanks for volunteering during Horsey 2004!

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### **Perfect solitude-en masse**

*Jason Kazee*

Cycling for me is the perfect escape. Whether I am fantasizing about one day climbing the famous Alps of France, the Dolomites of Italy, or, cruising to just enjoy a nice evening-cycling is church. On the bike, I can get away from everyone and anything. It doesn't matter if I am riding by myself or with 1,000 Horsey Hundred participants; the bike brings peace of mind, body, and soul.

In fact, cycling is so perfect in this regard that I honestly believe it to be more spiritually moving than attending church. I find proof of God's existence as a direct result of witnessing the world from the perspective of two 700c wheels. While climbing Lookout Mountain about mile 82 of the 3 State 3 Mountain century, I was so delirious that I actually thanked God for pain. It was definite proof I was doing what I truly wanted to do at that moment. Praying aloud, I thanked God for my wife, her support, the opportunity to be on this mountain, the ability to appreciate the climb and the discovery of my passion for cycling some thirteen years ago. It was like my own version of the Academy Awards and I had just won the Oscar for best actor, director, song, screenwriter, and animated feature.

Unfortunately, I believe a lot of this emotion can come across in a completely unintentional manner. When I am focused on the road, our surroundings, or just navigating through a pack of 20+ riders, I don't often talk to others. If I do, it's just a quick word or answer as I'm drifting back or heading up to the front. Again, I am drawn back to my church analogy. You're not supposed to talk during church

out of respect for the seriousness of the proceedings. I generally don't like to talk or stop during a ride because I am focused on riding the ride, gauging how I feel and trying to determine my capabilities for the day (although, I never really listen to myself when I think I should take it easy- yes, I am just that dumb). I am preparing myself for the task (s) at hand-devoting my time and self to getting the most enjoyment out of every turn of the pedals. I think we all do this on every ride to some degree; it's just a matter of how often and when.

This is not an apology but, rather, an explanation because to a certain extent, I believe I can come across as a snob when we're on the road. I don't intend to offend or accuse the rest of the membership of acting in a similar way. I think it's necessary to offer this explanation in the midst of our president's challenge to double our membership this year and, on a larger scale, alter the perception/mission of the club as a whole. If we truly want to grow as an organization, people like me need to change our standpoint on what expectations we ask the club to fulfill. Then the question ultimately becomes, will we be able to do that?

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### **Copy Due Dates**

Submissions for the September-October issue are due August 1, 2004.

Submit copy to Woodson Smith, 224 W. 4th St., Frankfort, KY 40601, (502) 320-2798, [jwsmith@plangraphics.com](mailto:jwsmith@plangraphics.com).

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### **If You Move...**

Let club secretary Wes Willoughby know your new address so you'll get your newsletter; they **are not** forwarded by the post office, and if BCC forwards them, it costs us extra postage.

Contact Wes via e-mail at [wes.willoughby@mail.state.ky](mailto:wes.willoughby@mail.state.ky). us or send a change of address card to the club address: BCC, P.O. Box 1397, Lexington, KY 40588-1397.

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### **Racing Info**

Check the [racing pages](#) on the BCC web site for up-to-date race information, schedules, and results. Also check out area racing at [www.ohiovalleyracing.org](http://www.ohiovalleyracing.org) or [www.truesport.com](http://www.truesport.com).

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### **Check your label!**

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