

Ohio 1000K Sept 9th – 11th 2006
“I Want to Ride My Bicycle”
Lynn Ho

It felt like that my schedule this year revolved around the biggest ride of my life, the Ohio 1000K. Everything was planned around it, including the much needed training rides, brevets, and even my wedding and honeymoon! We managed to convince Michael Rowny in joining us on this bicycling adventure, all rookies, having only achieved our first 600K this year. We also found out later that Bernd Kral was also taking on this challenge.

On day one, it started out nice and flat out of Grove City. After 20 miles, we were greeted with some rollers. At the first control, Steve Quade told us that the worst of the hills are over. I was so excited and thought to myself, this isn't bad at all!! However, the terrain became more “scenic” as we headed toward Marietta. Michael Rowny, Steve Ashurst (a.k.a my husband), and I, all agreed that Steve Quade's creditability was in question. At the rest stop, Michael pointed out that his jersey matched his arm warmer and that Mary Gersema would have approved. I agreed that Michael looked quite fashionable.

Steve and I ran out of water about 10 miles from the Marietta control. My captain, a native of Ohio, regretfully informed me that we're not likely to find a store on these rural roads. I looked down on my cue sheet and noticed that the next town was Watertown. I was sure there should be water there. Luckily, there was one store and we happily filled up our water bottles. Unfortunately, Michael and Steve Quade missed the store, probably because they were going too fast.

The four of us rode together on the return from Marietta. Steve Quade led us into a nice pace in the dark and with his on-air voice, announced the turns as they approached. I was very glad to have a new toy, a GPS receiver, on this ride, given the enormous number of turns getting in and out of Grove City, which we did in the dark. We were disappointed that Steve Quade was only riding a 400K and we would not see him the next day. At the end of the 400K, we feasted on instant ramen noodles and caught 3 hrs of sleep.

Waking up to a foggy morning and hoping to get in around 10pm to get a decent meal and 5 hrs of sleep, we were dismayed to find us in the hills when the fog lifted. In my tired state, I recalled the words of wisdom from Chris Mento:

1. Do not go anaerobic
2. Use hills as recovery

As we hit one hill after another, Michael would exclaim “oh goody, another recovery climb!” We had a lot of opportunity to practice tip #2, however, I still could not master it, especially on the Hocking Hills. We met up with Bob Waddell's group at the first rest stop. Paul Rozelle continued to provide words of encouragement, “you guys are doing great! Wasn't the down hill on Buena Vista awesome?” The downhill was great, but it sure was hard work getting up there!

The next stretch proved to be no easier. We were to climb over Tar Hallow which started up gradually, then turning steeper until it hit 17% grade at the final quarter of a mile. While huffing and puffing up the 17% grade, Steve tried to coach me, telling me something like “you are breathing too hard.. control your breathing..”. He even threatened to tell Chris Mento that I went anaerobic! Finally, at the top, Steve stopped the bike and ordered me down to take a walk to catch my breath. I was too winded for a tandem team meeting. The last stretch proved to be mellow and we enjoyed the company of the bright moon and quiet country roads.

The last day we slept in 30 more minutes because this last 300K was supposed to be flat according to Bob Waddell. Although the terrain was gentle in the beginning, our legs were especially sensitive, picking up even the slightest grades. Heading into Hillsboro wasn't exactly flat. But as the sky got darker, Steve picked up the pace, hoping to make it to the control before the rain dumped. We were .8 mile too late, but found a porch to hide under. I was relieved to have dodged the rain. However, Michael and Steve pointed out a true randonneur would have rode through the rain. I said, “I'd rather be dry than to be a true randonneur!”.

Getting from Hillsboro to Greenfield was gentle. We thought to ourselves, “Bob Waddell has mercy after all!” As the ride wore on, Michael noted that a massage would be a wonderful idea and I couldn’t agree more. However, Steve had alternative views. He argued that doing another bike ride is just as effective as getting a massage. Per Steve, when you keep riding, it pushes the lactic acid out of your muscles, the same effect as a massage. I told Steve that I would volunteer to be in the control group and wished him luck on finding volunteers for the test group!

After Greenfield, we spotted a cue “Potts Hill Rd (Who said anything about hills on this section???)”. Is this a joke from Bob Waddell we asked. As we hit Potts Hill Rd, it was a long steady climb up and up. We noted that Bob Waddell has no mercy after all! At this point, Steve was getting very excited for whatever reason. He started singing “Bicycle Races” from Queen: “Bicycle bicycle bicycle I want to ride my bicycle bicycle bicycle I want to ride my bicycle I want to ride my bike I want to ride my bicycle I ...” while again I huffed and puffed. Finally, we descend into the last control. Michael got off his bike and immediately sat down and squeezed out a bottle of water from his bandanna! After refueling, we headed out to finish the last 50 miles in the dark. This ended up to be the longest 50 miles I’ve ever ridden, I couldn’t wait to get off the saddle! No moon accompanied us, just the sounds of our occasional groans. We somehow managed to complete the ride! Who will ever believe that a Motel 6 had a heavenly shower and heavenly bed?!

We were blessed with great weather and lots of encouragements from our fellow DC and Ohio randonneurs. On Tuesday morning, we woke up to heavy rain. I was so thankful we didn’t have to ride in it! Then I remembered those who had to ride in the rain on the last day of BMB and I am even more impressed at their determination. We drove back to Maryland playing “We are the Champions” from Queen:

I've paid my dues -
Time after time -
I've done my sentence
But committed no crime -
And bad mistakes
I've made a few
I've had my share of sand
kicked in my face -
But I've come through

We are the champions - my friends
And we'll keep on fighting -
till the end -
We are the champions -
We are the champions,
No time for losers
'cause we are the champions -
of the world -

I've taken my bows
And my curtain calls -
You brought me fame and fortune
and everything that goes with it -
I thank you all -
But it's been no bed of roses
No pleasure cruise -
I consider it a challenge before
the whole human race -
And I ain't gonna lose -

We are the champions - my friends
And we'll keep on fighting -
till the end -
We are the champions -
We are the champions,
No time for losers
'cause we are the champions -
of the world -