



Making a Difference

The 2011 Ride will go into my books as the easiest course but the toughest weather of the three years I have participated in the event. All week long prior to the Ride, I faithfully monitored the weather channel....it was steady....18 degrees, mostly sunny, winds light.....BOY!.....now I know why they deal in probabilities!

Saturday morning dawned in glorious fashion. It was calm, a bit cool but nice....however as I drove to Spruce Meadows at 6 am for the kick off I noticed clouds coming in from the west. As I silently cursed the weather man I realized that compared to hearing the doctor tell you that you had cancer....this really wasn't that bad. Fortunately, the weather stayed good on Saturday....a bit breezy after 11 AM but for the most part it was a cross wind and the temperature was acceptable. At about 8:30 AM, 2,280 riders (having raised \$8.6 million for cancer research!) flowed out of Spruce Meadows just south of Calgary and headed south to Chain Lakes Provincial Park. The 112 km of day 1 were relatively straight forward with no major hills and my biggest challenge was changing a flat tire about 8 km from our campsite. Not too serious... but I wound up with lots of grease on my hands from my chain.

Camp was excellent. A number of our team hung out right beside the beer tent in the sun and out of the breeze....FANTASTIC!!!!!! Dinner was good and I hung around listening to the entertainment for a bit before turning in to my two man 6'X6' tent along with my tent mate who has had the good grace to put up with me for 3 years...thanks Dale! Sleep was fitful as it usually is for me and we rose at 5:30AM to light rain and a dull sky and a north northwest wind, which meant we would fight it all day long...CURSES!!!!!! At 7:15 I took off. The first 30 km was in a light rain but also light wind. The town of Longview was at the 40km mark when the rain (more or less) stopped but the wind increased exponentially. After changing my SECOND flat tire (GRRRRR!!!!!!) about 15 km down the road from Longview I headed on the homestretch. (Thanks to the nameless rider who stopped to give...not sell... but give me an inner tube!) Unfortunately the wind was really howling....directly in our face and 30 of the next 40 km were straight into what I would guess was a 30 km wind. I was in low or mid range gears for most of those kms...cursing under my breath and then reminding myself....I had not (like my sister) just received the diagnosis of cancerso it was head down and onward! Finally around 1 pm I turned east on Hwy 22x which turned the headwind into a crosswind for the last 12 km to Spruce Meadows where I gratefully accepted a beer and a burger as reward for the tough 106 km of day 2.

So even though this was probably the toughest ride, it was also the most satisfying one for a couple reasons. First and foremost was because of my sister's battle with breast cancer. Her surgery is on Tuesday, June 28 so thoughts of that were foremost in my mind (good luck Kathy!). More than ever I hoped my effort was making a difference. The second was the opportunity to re-unite with team members and many other riders who shared the goal of beating this awful disease. It was a tough ride but I know deep in my bones, it was worth it.

Once again I have to acknowledge the tireless work of the hundreds of volunteers. You cheered us on, you fed us, you watered us and you made sure we had a tent over our heads....two thumbs up!!!!!!

So as I close down for the 2011 Ride to Conquer Cancer, I would, one more time, like to say thanks again to my many donors who helped me raise \$13,500 this year and over \$40,000 in the three years I have participated...your support in words and \$\$ was most appreciated. I mentioned in my pre-ride blog how I drew on those thoughts and good wishes and believe me I was sure drawing on them into that wind today. Thank all of you!

by Michael Tumback on Sun, Jun 26, 2011 @ 11:58 PM