

600 Kilometer Edwardsville Brevet

May 24-25, 2003

This is a short ride report. I've named it ... "375 Miles, or My favorite 205 Mile Ride"

The 600k went exceedingly well on Saturday May 24th. It was a beautiful day and went according to, or better than my plans. Fourteen riders started from Edwardsville at 4:00 AM. I ended up riding the first 150 miles with five of these riders. We took turns at the front and kept the pace (depending on who was at the front) between 15 and 18 miles per hour. I thought some of the off bike time was a bit much, but it totaled under two hours for the whole 205 miles to Vienna. I think it could have been 20 minutes or so less, but what the heck, it was nice to have so much company.

The first 150 miles of this ride were pretty flat to gently rolling. The last 55 miles is where the real hills began to take a bite out of our legs and broke up the group. Jeff Harris of Memphis and I went off the front and after waiting a few times for the others, decided to ride at our own pace. We got into Vienna at 6:50 PM with Rich Frost just a few minutes behind. 14 hours 50 minutes total elapsed time with breaks

Jeff Harris' original plan was to ride straight through the night, but I think we scared him with stories of drunk drivers and a holiday weekend. So with Jeff Harris sharing a room with Rich Frost and myself, we decided to team up Sunday morning and head out of the hotel parking lot at 3:00AM in order to make it to Murphysboro (mile 250 miles) with a cutoff time of 6:45AM.

Jeff was a very slow starter and we didn't head out until 3:20 AM. Rich wasn't ready to hit the road yet and told us to head on out. After an hour or so it began to rain. As rain wasn't forecasted, we only had wind breakers. We were soaked but kept moving. With the rain, we couldn't see well. Jeff and I were definitely riding faster on the descents than we should. Thankfully, the roads didn't have any sharp turns to negotiate.

Louis Branz of Edwardsville IL and Tom Gee of Paris TN, whom I didn't know, caught and passed us on one of the many hills in the Shawnee National Forest. Jeff and I tried to pick our pace up in hopes of making the cutoff time. I fell off the back but kept to within one minute of these riders the rest of the way into Murphysboro. We missed the cutoff into Murphysboro by 15 minutes.

The four of us pulled into a McDonalds just to the north of town to warm up, eat and hopefully, dry off a bit. Not making the cutoff along with the poor weather conditions, Jeff, Louis and I packed it in. Tom Gee was the only rider to continue. There were about five or six more riders behind who also missed the cutoff. Of the 14 riders who started I've heard that seven quit due to the weather and poor visibility. The weather folks really blew it!

Jeff Weible finished in 23:50, in the rain, riding alone, freezing cold, with no rain gear. He rode the last 100 miles on one cookie and some water, keeping any breaks down to two minutes.

Yes, I felt fine and knew I could finish the distance. So why didn't I? Simple logic really. A strict reading of the rules said as I was outside the cutoff for an intermediate checkpoint, I wouldn't earn the medal, so the remaining miles would just be training miles. I've already suffered through rain, snow, sleet and nasty wind, so why do it again when it didn't matter. I decided to call it a day, and look at doing it again on June 7th and 8th.

Yes I can finish, I just need to have the proper clothing AND keep ahead of the cut off time. On this note I've made a hotel reservation already in Anna IL another 25 miles up the road. This way I'll ride longer on day one, and have less miles for day two and be closer to the next checkpoint.

I would really like to get my 600k medal and the Super Randonneuring medal, but I don't want to risk my life or

health more than necessary. As Rose Ann said, "wise choice".