

May I have the floor, shop, hand pump please!
BBC 2005
The Fisher Report
By Greg "Bulldog Fisher"

It seems that the bulldog would try to all he could do to not finish a very hilly and difficult BBC Century. We would arrive at the college in Montevallo at 7:15 and get our registration bags and stuff. We get back to the car to unload. We see Dave Casebeer and Phil Hardee come up and Dave is eyeing my rear tire. I look up and said what! , Dave said can't ride on that Tire! It's the only one I have which was flat (New Tires are rounded on the surface that contacts the road, when they wear out that surface appears flat) the tire surface also looked like that of the moon. They went up to Phil' car and came back with a brand new tire. They said he didn't want me to have a flat out there.

Many of you who have ridden with me know that I don't hammer or try to stay out front much. I ride my pace so I can finish and get up the next morning without hiring private nurses to help me. This ride had some 375 folks at the starting gate. I would just follow the flow till we get out of town. The rocket riders usually go out and social folks stay together talking and weaving. The first fifty is really pretty and has a few good climbs which spreads the group out for miles. I am riding along pretty well; a group passes me and goes ahead. I don't give chase, this is dumb because I have to conserve my strength to finish. The next thing I know I hear something like a 22 pistol firing and thought, what was that! and then in a second or two I knew. I had a flat tire. Fifteen centuries this year with out a flat till now. I get off the bike and pull the rear wheel off; it's always the rear tire, right. I open my saddle bag and get a tube out. I thought now I can try out that tube I got at a yard sale. Words of advice, if you see an unboxed bike tube at a yard sale, don't buy it.

I could also try out my frame pump I never used. Riders passed and asked if I was OK, I said I was fine, wrong! I couldn't get the tire to inflate. Another fellow rode by and asked and out of desperation I said I needed help. He popped out a CO2 cartridge and wham I was riding. I get to the rest stop and see a floor pump and start to pump the tire. I look at the gauge and it has Bars, which is metric measure for pressure. All I know about metric is 2 liter drinks and three day weekends. Any how, I get the tire pumped but it doesn't feel right on the road. I ride the out of the valley all the way to Billingsely where I knew the tire was going down and I heading for a pinch flat. I pull over and notice a van pull up behind and wouldn't you know it was the BBC sag and it had a floor pump. They pumped the tire and I going again. I rode another 10 miles and felt like the tire was going down again. I rode to last rest stop and made a wrong turn. I stop at a junction in the rode as the tire is flat again. They are no riders anywhere. I stop and try to pump the tire up, no go. I look in the bag and pull out another tube of dubious condition and start to put it in. An older gentleman in a van pulled and looked over toward me like it knew me. It turned out it was working for the BBC picking up "Bikers on the road signs". He asked was I having trouble and I told I had a tire losing air and did he have a floor pump. I looked in the van it seems he had every thing but a pump. I was already at 98 miles and give out (past tired). He asked wouldn't I like to get out of the hot sun? I thought I wanted a floor pump to get my tire pumped up or wet my pants and suck my thumb. The whole time the man seemed puzzled and said I think you are off course. I was then a little frustrated at this. He got the map out and said I needed to back track to way I came to the last rest stop about 4 miles with hills. He also mentioned something about giving a lift back to that point but something broke down in the communication and the next thing know he says good luck and left.

I had the tire mounted and inflated or at least I thought. I start down the road and notice the tire running lumpy. The tire as not seated on the rim was about to pop and I would stranded for sure. I stopped and looked and saw the tire bulging out. I let some air out and resealed the tire I pumped it back and road back the last rest stop. I was told that had only 13 miles to go. Had I stayed on the route I was on I would had 4 extra miles on a dangerous road way instead I wound up with 8 extra. I got back an hour and 15 minutes later than I planned. Congrates to Mandy Nichols and Michael Hayes, who completed this very difficult ride with rates 8 out of 10 on the Larry Pierson Century difficulty scale.

Bulldog