

Black Belt Century
"Beat the Fat"
The Fisher Report
By Greg "Bulldog" Fisher

This century ride is a brand new route for the Southern Cycling Series. This route encompasses Pickens, Sumter, Green and a tiny part of Marengo County. Saturday morning around 7:45 A.M. would find Gary and the always lovely Tricia Falls, Phil Hardee, Bruce Smith, Brad Poindexter, Larry Pierson, Daniel DeJarnette and yours truly, would meet at the Northport Civic Center.

We stood around a few minutes to see who wanted to ride with whom. To make a long story short or shorter, we decided it would be more economical for 8 people to go in 5 different cars.

We arrived around 8:30 A.M. at the National Guard Amory in Aliceville. We unloaded and did all the pre-ride stuff. Air the tires, put on the silly looking shoes, put on the helmet and empty the bladder!

We get together to have our picture taken. Pictures are an important part of a ride. The picture tells a story in place of the words I can't spell when describing a ride. After getting the picture taken we saddle up and head down State 17 on the way to Pickens 85. We ride about 5 miles and turn on to Co. 85 and see a sign that says "Bumpy Road".

.....This is like saying that Henry the Eight has a little weight problem. On most poor roads you dodge the bumps and pot holes. On this road or last half of it, this is not a problem! The road is all bumps and pot holes. You get the effect in the handlebars of riding a bronco.

We ride a ways down this road, till we see a sign that says Taylor Overlook. We ride up a high bank on the Tombigbee River. This has a beautiful view of the countryside and the river. We are welcomed by a nice breeze, which is wind when you are out on the bike. We rest a few minutes and the after some taking care of bathroom stuff we are back on the road.

We ride some 30 miles and come to a beautiful little town of Gainesville, Al in Sumter County. This is a beautiful little town rich in history and beauty. Gary Falls and I, being Sons of the Confederacy, stood on the place where Nathan Bedford Forest was paroled in 1865. This town also at one time had a coffin factory. That's what they used to call them before they invented Funeral Homes. It also has beautiful antebellum homes and churches.

It would be here that we would part company with Gary, Tricia and Daniel. They would take 39 back across the river on to Co. 20 and eventually back to State 14 and then to nirvana. The rest of us would take 21 to highway 11 back across the river to Boligee. I think Boligee is French for bad roads. When we hit 11, the Bulldog starts to fade. I start to get behind and really have to push to keep up. This would play the devil on my feet because they would later start to cramp.

Once we get to Boligee, we take a break. We stop at the local gas station. I have to take my shoes to get my aching feet a break. I go into the store and lady behind the counter who "loves her Job" tells me that I have to have shoes on. So I go out and get back on my orthopedic tap dance shoes, so I can walk in the store to get a pale of water.

We rest some and take in some the local music weather we want to or not.

It seems the local folk think everybody likes rap music. I am sorry but I would rather listen to a mule break wind than listen to rap music. Enough of soul train; we are back on the pavement.

We would take a westerly route on 20, 142 and 148 in Green County and then back on 20. This part of the ride will "Beat the Fat". I have ridden thousands of miles on some rough roads. These roads are in the top 25 for the roughest of the rough. These roads are cross between riding on railroad ties and cobblestone. Although the scenery is beautiful and the fields this time of the year are breath taking. The only thing breath taking was the rough surface.

The group would split about 10 above highway 11 from Boligee. Larry would drop back some to be with the bulldog. We would ride till we are on Pickens 115 and Larry spots a snake on a bank. I don't see anything because I am delirious from exhaustion. Larry picks the snake up and tells me to hold it. Now this thing is alive and smells to high heavens. I hold the snake and he snaps the picture. I ask him to take the snake now! He lets him go and doesn't kill him. What would he have killed him with..... a water bottle!

We ride on to Co. 89 on the 10 miles of blessing, State 14. This road was as smooth as a baby's backside. This gave the Bulldog the rest his feet badly needed. We would take it on in back to the Amory where we see Phil, Bruce and Brad, who where about 15 minutes ahead.

All this was a super route and gorgeous weather and beautiful scenery. The roads need some TLC but don't they all. If do this ride, take a Celebrex, Advil or a shot of courage. You're going need it!!