

## Bulldog bonks at mile 60 at Cheaha, film at 11

The Fisher Report  
By Greg ( Bulldog)Fisher

As you well know, most of my ride reports are funny and tell picture story of bike rides. This report is a little more personal. It tells a story of a rider who fried and didn't complete the ride. It tells of disappointment and humiliation. It tells of understanding and friendship. If you would like to put this on the DCBC site, that's fine you might edit it some.

I would want to preface this report by recognizing 4 tremendous individuals. Pixie Hicks, Peggy Deci, Gretchen Eens, and Pat Ferguson. These people exemplify what it takes to not only do Cheaha, but complete the ride. Pat rode all the way to the park. This was his goal. He is 65 years old. Gretchen and Pixie did the whole century ride.

A testament to determination, athletic ability, strength and mental toughness. Peggy Deci rode sag for about 7 miles. When we got to the park she decided to get on the bike and finish the ride with her friends. This is one the reasons I love cycling. This women was wiped out, Yet it was her love for her friends and her personal determination that got her back on the bike and endured much suffering to finish the ride. They were the last to finish, but they finished. They have my utmost respect.

It is asked often of Cheaha, Have you done Cheetah, or did you do the Cheaha Century ride. When I am asked, I will say I did what I could. I ride up Saturday with Larry Pierson. We do 30 miles on the chief ladiga trail. We set up our sleeping arrangements at the Piedmont Civic Center. We went out and got some dinner and head back to the civic center.

I was tired and anxious about the ride. I put my sleeping bag down and try to sleep. I slept about 3 hours maybe, I am not sure. Morning finally arrives and we go upstairs and I force down some eggs and a bagel and some granola and some juice.

It was finally time to line up. The site of 500 riders was over whelming. I pull up next to Tricia Falls and I can't get of my left clip and almost fall over and take us both out before we get started. A prelude of things to come. The first 35 miles I am strong, I am thinking, I am going to be all right. I am pulling the wads up in the freewheel and derailleur. I can't clip about 4 miles from the third rest stop and the steepest pull. I am at the bottom of a big out and I fall over. I get up and get the hills and passing people and just ripping. I am pull. I shift to my lowest gear and my chain chain back on, and start over. This was the beginning of the end. This would happen again before I got to the park. The hills on this ride are massive and never seem to end. The pulls are long and steep and curve so as to give you the look of never ending pull. Of coarse where one must go up, one must go down. This is where going down hill is not for the faint of heart. I was going down a hill and was almost at the bottom when I hear a rider come by me really fast. It was scary. If I had moved to the left a foot, I would be in the Anniston hospital right now.

When I get to the park I have a bike shop guy work on the bike. I am 30 minutes waiting for the guy to fix the bike. He replaces the shift cable and lubes the shifter. I am off again for the turn around point. The bike would screw up again before I get to the turn around point.

When I get to the turn around point I see the bike guy again. He does some more adjusting on the bike. I start back, and at this point I am mentally and physically fried. I go 2 miles and I am going up a steep straight hill like we have around here. I am half way up it and I just shut down. I pull off and I throw my helmet down and take my gloves off and sit down waiting for the sag. I ride sag the rest of the way in. I thought at one time to saddle back up and finish the ride but my heart wasn't in it. This is the first century ride I bonked on. I came close on a couple of others. I did get to the top of the mountain. I did 60 miles and experienced Cheaha. When I returned in the sag wagon to the Start-Finish line. I see some of my riding friends, Larry and Gary and the always-lovely Tricia and Sam Evans. I would have rather got out with a paper bag over my head to cover my identity. I sucked it up and walked over to them and told what happened. They were very supportive and understanding. I could tell they were sad for me, this means a lot. The people who put this ride on are a tremendous group of people. They work very hard and are very well organized. They are great folks and care very much for the safety and enjoyment of the riders. This is an area wide effort and contributes to the large amount people who do this very difficult ride. I know that good equipment is critical on a ride of this magnitude. Of coarse anything can happen. If I do it again, it will not be on the old Cannondale. There was fellow who rode with me in the sag wagon, who had a custom bike, super components, and the whole deal. He suffered from cramps and could not continue. I was maybe not ready for Cheaha. I tried my best. The bike let me down. My body and mind let me down. It was a tough day for the bulldog. Will I do Cheaha next year? At this point I am sure. A year can make a lot of difference.

Bulldog