

**Montevallo Century**  
**September 16 th, 2006**  
**“Help I’ve been Robbed”**  
**The Fisher Report**  
**By Greg Bulldog Fisher**

This is without a doubt, the hardest ride I have ever done or rivals Cheaha so closely, you would need a microscope to tell the difference. There were so many large steep climbs, I lost count. There was only a hand full that completed this 100 mile exercise in torture.

I was riding sweep, as the sweep rider you stay in the back and sweep up all the poo the bikers ahead leave on the roadway. No I am kidding, my task is to watch the progression of the ride to make sure everyone ahead is on course and not having any problems. I guess if the sweep rider has a problem, too bad for him. Generally on a century ride we meet at Capitol Park, Mount Olive church, Coker etc.

This ride would start form our own Rob Hope’s home in Woodland Forrest. Heck fire we had to climb a hill just to get out onto Buttermilk road. There was maybe 15 Folks show up to sport their climbing savvy on a beautiful cool Saturday morning. These rides are almost always predictably unpredictable. You never know how far folks are riding. It never hurts to ask as you may get sucked into a fast group only going 65 and you are doing a century and only have so many matches to burn.

This ride starts in north eastern Tuscaloosa and goes into Bibb and Shelby counties.

This ride is the Genius of Rob Hope, a great road bike rider as well as a very good mountain biker. He also plays some golf, and probably good at that as well.

Rob gave us a ride that challenges the heart and the mind, a ride that causes you to ride above yourself. This is a ride I wish everyone could do, from the Hill top vistas in Bibb and Shelby County, to the beautiful Cahaba River.

The route also takes through the University Of Montevallo campus which is a very pretty campus.

The roads were good for the most part if you leave out Shelby- Bibb County road 10, a patch work piece of sag that should be called a disaster area. I swear the roadway look like it had been shelled.

This roadway was busy, big trucks, red necks, and everyone in Bibb and Shelby County drove a blinkin Diesel truck that emits black smoke you could cut with a knife. There is nothing on this road, except traffic and gas lines and traffic and gas lines. It did have a large steep, gut wrenching, rough climb that brought out the heavy breathing in all of us. It must have been 2 miles in length.

Of coarse the climb of the day had to been the 2 and 1/2 mile climb on the other side of the Cahaba river bridge. This sucker had a 15 % grade at least and makes the sweat pop out like you were eating hot peppers.

Climb this puppy and just about got it whipped. There was four of us on this large climb and a fellow who was with had just got backing into riding after a bout a 25

year hiatus was having some trouble on the climb and dropped back some. I figured he would recover and catch back up. We stopped at the store in West Blocton. We refreshed and rested some. Two of the fellows wanted to go on ahead. We had been at the store for about 15 minutes and the other fellow in our group had not appeared. I had no choice but to ride down the road to see if I could find him. I rode down to the little grocery store and there he was sitting outside the store drinking some water. I was relieved to find him and told him when he was ready we would leave.

We begin our trek backward down Vance road, then on to Wallace Chapel in Bibb and Wire road in Tuscaloosa County. By this time the cool has all but worn off and it beginning to warm up into the mid 70's and with that fatigue and muscle cramps. We ride pretty well through Coaling and then start on King's Mill. By this time my riding partner is really starting to cramp and felt like he was going bonk. We stop at a little church I remembered and I got him some water and we rested for a bit. I asked him how he was feeling and he said better. I asked him do want to continue and he said yes.

We start down Keens Mill and finally Buttermilk road, bypassing Clements and Jim Jones road. We finally made it back and my man would wound up with his first century in over 30 years, however he missed the final turn going back to Rob's house. I hoped he didn't go too far, I was too give to give out to find him. He finally figured his error and made it back to Rob's home where we were treated to burgers and beverages of our choice, it doesn't get much better than that.