

## Day 13 Update

September 21, 2007

Day 13: Effingham, IL to Indianapolis, IN

After enjoying a better than usual continental breakfast in their Effingham hotel, the Alumni Bike Race team was ready to take on another day of long mileage and peaceful countryside along Route 40, the Historic National Road. With only 146 mostly flat miles to the day's destination in Indiana, the riders entertained thoughts of posting triple digit mileage. Inspired by the hundred-miles performances of Frank, Walt, and Pat the previous day, senior Penn riders Bruce and Mike, along with junior Bucknell riders Kyle and Jay decided to make a run at the century mark.

While the team split into two groups, Nir, Pat, Bruce, and Mike in the Penn van and Frank, Walt, Kyle, and Jay in the Bucknell van, all the cyclists embarked from an Effingham start point. After an early flat tire, Jay and the Bucknell group fell behind. Walt and Frank, fresh of their monumental hundred-mile riders, were feeling sore yet serene in the warm September sun. With Kyle and Jay as riding companions, the duo of Bucknellians rode fifty miles before noon, stopping at charming covered bridge and the cheerful main street of Greenup, IL; a cheerful town lined with attractive brick buildings with white two-story porches. The simplistic beauty of the rural Midwest, from the smiling, well-wishing onlookers in Greenup to the acres of sun-bathed cornfields, made riding a truly uplifting experience.

In Marshall, IL, the Penn and Bucknell crews ran into one another in a diner where they met a man who had been the town mayor, police chief and school bus driver. On their way out of the restaurant, an elderly couple stopped by the riders' tables and wished them well on their journey. Small town life in Illinois on this sunny Friday was proving fit for a series of Norman Rockwell paintings, and it made riding daunting mileage feel like a privilege rather than a chore.

As they had since the beginning of the day, Mike and Bruce continued east on US Route 40 with the third riders Pat and Nir taking turns driving the van. In the early afternoon the group crossed the state border into Indiana, the eighth of fourteen states on the trip. Through busy town centers crammed with traffic and stoplights, and over long, steep rollers on congested stretches of highway, Both the Penn group and Kyle and Jay of the Bucknell team continued their quests for a hundred mile day. With hamstrings screaming and sweat dripping, the riders churned their way through the increasingly hilly terrain. At near eighty miles on the day, riders Kyle and Jay found themselves astounded by the beauty of the soft sunlight leaning on red barns and across vast fields of corn.

Mike and Bruce felt twinges of cramping muscles and sore joints, but pressed on to record 105 miles apiece. Junior rider Kyle and Jay also achieved their goals and completed their first centuries as cyclists. Having lost an hour by crossing from Central to Eastern Standard Time, the riders arrived at their Indianapolis hotel at dusk. Alumni Bike Race newcomer and Penn Alum Ted Lansky '64 was waiting for the Penn team upon its arrival. With a bolstered roster, the Alumni

Bike Race team was feeling excited about the prospect of continuing their journey into Ohio and on into the mighty inclines of the Appalachian mountains of West Virginia.

To date, the race team has completed 2,223 of 3,050 total miles across the country and 64,760 of 103,000 feet of climbing elevation. While geographically the remainder of the course looks short, the substantial number of climbing feet are yet to be covered serves as a reminder that last six days of the trip will challenge the strength and endurance of the team.

Jay Kosa, Bucknell '07