

Day 14 Update

September 22, 2007

Day 14: Indianapolis, IN to London, OH

After two long days of biking across Illinois and much of Indiana, the Alumni Bike Race team was preparing to ride into Ohio and the last of the flat land before the steep ridges of the Appalachians. With the addition of alumni rider Ted Lansky, the Penn team improved its roster and received a much needed shot of energy and a fresh pair of legs. With 140 miles to cover on the day, the Penn team, which also included Mike, Bruce, and Nir took a couple early morning hours to rest before embarking on the course.

The Bucknell team, composed entirely of alumni riders spanning three generations, decided to get an early start. The group left at 6:30am and drove a few miles to the start-point in suburban Indianapolis while the morning was still dark and uncomfortably cold. As the sun crept up over the eastern tree-line and dried the dew off surrounding wheat fields, senior Bucknell riders Frank and Walt rode twenty-five miles. Bright red barns and white split-rail fences lined the roads and made the arduous ride feel like a Saturday morning stroll through the country. By noon the duo reached the Ohio state line along Route 40, the Historic National Road. Not only was Ohio the ninth of fourteen states visited along the cross-country tour, but it was also the fifth state reached in five states.

Junior Bucknell alumni riders Kyle, Pat, and Jay contributed support miles intermittently throughout the day in a tour that passed through several small towns including one dear to the hearts of the riders: Lewisburg, Ohio. Having each spent four years in Lewisburg, Pennsylvania, the five riders found the quaint and friendly town a pleasant reminder of collegiate life at Bucknell. After a brief respite of picture-taking and exploring in Lewisburg, the group returned to the road for a long afternoon of cycling. Frank and Walt completed 56 miles apiece on the day.

While the Bucknell group spent the afternoon traveling moderate miles at a steady clip, the Penn group felt the need to encourage their alumni to donate funds to the race. While Bucknell managed to raise over one million dollars during the first ten days, the Penn team was still struggling to muster 300,000 dollars in scholarship funds for young people who could not otherwise afford to go to the distinguished university. Discouraged and somewhat embarrassed, the three senior Penn riders decided to ride Centuries, with Mike and Bruce completing a hundred miles in two consecutive days. While the feat would undoubtedly push the physical limits of the riders, the trio was determined to accomplish the goal to show pride in their alma mater and their cause. Riding three at a time and rotating the lead position in order to draft off of one another to conserve energy, the Penn team trudged up long gradual hills and churned their ways through headwinds and mid-day heat. Ted proved himself a strong rider and integral member of the Penn team with his brisk and consistent pace while Mike and Bruce showed incredible determination. It was after dusk when the Penn team arrived at the hotel in London, but they had arrived triumphant.

Members of both the Bucknell and the Penn teams got to bed early, recognizing the importance of being well-rested fully-recovered for the final five days of the race across America. With the foothills of southeastern Ohio awaiting them in day 15, the Alumni Bike Race team was grateful to have one more day of moderate difficulty before reaching the dreaded

terrain of West Virginia.