

Musing McKinney

You should ride like "Me" -- The gospel of Double Centuries.

By: The Reverend, Scott McKinney

Have you ever noticed how every cyclist is a missionary for their discipline? We're all guilty. Pop psych here, but riding makes people so happy that they want others to experience their joy too. These zealots (including me) believe no one else can experience any endorphin rush at all unless they are racing crits, doing triathlons, riding double centuries, mountain biking, riding with this group or that, or doing whatever it is that makes them happy. In essence, others should ride like "me." Lucky for all, this is good-natured fun and the crusades that are waged in the name of THIS religion are contested through speed and endurance.

My sect is the holy order of the double century. Truth be told, my recruiting efforts strive to add cult members who I can draft for 200 miles. I'm aware of my behavior. I've even tried to curtail my proselytizing. Never-the-less, I'm compelled to preach the good word to riders I think need saving.

Take my friend "John" -- an alias because there are several riders who I've tried to convert over the years. John is a 40ish cycling junkie who likes long rides in the park, old movies (like Stage 15 from the Tour), and regaling his friends with cycling lore. In the opinion of this author and others, John has sufficient stamina, speed and experience to crush a double century -- particularly the relatively flat course of Davis. Yet John's goals for the year don't include a double century event. Some argue that his goals fall short of his ability. Following are excerpts from various failed attempts to convince John to join the ranks of the redeemed:

Dear John (or Jill, or Tom, or Dick or Harry):

You achieved your big goal of riding Iowa Hill this year by March. Perhaps you underestimated your ability and set the bar too low. When you get to the top of the hill, brother, climb the mountain brother. What the hell, did Moses chisel your goals in stone? When I overshoot my goals, I extend them (I'm also a self-righteous bastard who uses a soap box for a bully pulpit). Last year, for example, I set out to earn my California Triple Crown Jersey (three doubles in one year). Then I met the apostle Curtis, who helped me understand how under-whelming completing a mere three doubles would be. So, I increased my goal to five -- the Thousand Mile Club. I believe it's OK to change your target if your original goals were attained more easily or sooner than you expected. That sort of flexibility keeps you honest.

Quite frankly, we're all too old not to seize every opportunity we have. The best double century riders are between 35 and 45. Next year your bike could break, you could get an injury, or any number of other distraction could interfere (insert music from alter call, raise your hand, and cry "Hallelujah!"). The high-performance window for doubles is not perpetual, my friend. Carpe Diem.

I sincerely hope you join us for the Davis Double Century (the DC) on May 19. You are fully trained for it and will have experienced guides. It won't get any better or easier than it is right now. For perspective, the DC has just 8,400 feet of climbing. You do that much climbing on your average Saturday ride without batting an eye. On the DC, climbing is clustered between mile 60 and 130. After that, it's downhill and tailwind all the way home. The DC is considered a good first

double because the difficulty is rated "Medium" (although every double is hard and the course should always, always be respected). Following are eleven more compelling and lucid reasons to ride the DC:

1. There are 700 to 1,000 really good cyclists out there (unlike most centuries). Where else can you trade pulls with RAAM finishers and other elite, amateur endurance cyclists?;
2. Pacelines with 60 or 70 people are fun and fast. Your average speed will be ~24 MPH for the first 60 miles. You will likely break five hours in the first hundred;
3. It's an "epic" day -- everything about it, no doubt about it;
4. The route will take you all over Northern California into some really nice terrain;
5. It's the next logical step on your quest for incremental, steady improvement;
6. Once you do one, you'll be hooked -- and Curtis and I will have another partner in crime;
7. The focus of committing to and preparing for the DC will propel your riding to a new level;
8. The overload training effect of 10+ hours of riding makes every other event more achievable;
9. You will experience ebb and flow in performance, enjoy emotional highs, question your own judgment, and ultimately enjoy the euphoria and gratification of completing something that few other riders have the balls to attempt. Moreover, you will manage it all because you are well prepared, fit, and experienced;
10. You'll be shocked to learn that a lot of old dudes and dudettes will kick your ass. So you'll train even better in the future until one day, you're an old dude with the skills to kick around the youngsters;
11. It's time you stopped questioning your skills and just do it.

I'm sure those guys on the super fat tire, low-rider, Harley bicycles with the high-boy handle bars think I should join them too. Actually, they may have a case. Now where did I put my studded jeans with the silver chain?

Learn more at: <http://www.caltriplecrown.com/schedule.htm#davis>

Registration deadline is May 11: http://www.active.com/event_detail.cfm?event_id=%201430282