



Double Trouble I

Knoxville Double Recap

By: Scott McKinney (with Curtis Taylor)

Instant Karma? I knew I was in trouble from the very beginning. The tag on my registration bag said, "rider requested t-shirt but did not include the \$6." I took the shirt even though I don't remember requesting it. I hope Karma got her pound of flesh in the form of two flat tires. I think I'll mail in the \$6 before the interest compounds.

Curtis and I finished in a time of 12:30 – just before sunset; we tied for 5th place. Even though it's an un-timed event, we know when the top riders started and who started an hour before us. We would have finished even better but my two flat tires that cost us about 10 minutes (miles 45 and 150) . We hung with the eventual winner (Graham Pollack, who is tuning up for the 508) and two other studs until my first flat. That's when Curtis said, "Thank you man – I couldn't keep up much longer."

Let's be honest though, there's no way either of us would have hung on for the 8-mile climb that started at 50 miles, or the 30-mile climb that started at mile 70. Still, we were only 15 minutes behind at lunch (mile 105), and 45 minutes back of the winner at the finish.

Our total time was 12:30 – the time it takes to go from beginning to end (rest stops, lunch, flats, peeing, etc.). My cycle computer also tracks ride time (11:30 in this case). At our first rest stop I spent about 3 minutes (peeing, eating, and filling bottles), and I was the slowest of the five leaders. At the other extreme, I met two acquaintances at lunch who had finished eating before we rolled in (they started the event well before we did). They were still wandering around when we left. Dilly-dallying at rest stops impacts overall time. Moreover, taking 30 to 45 minutes for lunch gives your legs a chance to cool off which makes it hurt that much more when you start up again. We gained time and places on most casual riders at every stop.

While this ride was not a race, the same thing occurs at timed events as well. It seems simple, but this is an area where most riders can improve (if they want to).

On this ride, much of the road wasn't much of a road at all. Many, many miles were absolutely hammered; potholes galore on Knoxville Road itself, numerous, dry, concrete stream crossings. This is exactly the sort of road you live for when you ride an aluminum frame. It gives you such a wonderful road feel and that in-touch-feeling others crave. Why would you ride anything else? In fact, I should have replaced my carbon seat post with aluminum to maximize the effect. The pounding of Knoxville Road, and some other sections, was offset by the buttery smoothness of several 50mph downs. Speaking of down, Howell Mt. Road drops 800 feet in about 6 miles into Pope Valley. While navigating this technical, winding drop on perfect pavement we nearly ran over a cautious lady who was doing 10mph max; not sure if, or when, she planned to finish. It's quite possible that she's still out there provided she still has some brake pads.

Gross event: before bonking for real, I downed a Cliff Shot then went for the PowerBar shot. Unfortunately, the warm packet spurted over my leg, pants and bike in a nasty, adult-film sort

of way. Not only did I waste part of the vital benefit, I used half my fresh water to rinse the mess down my leg and into my shoe; not sure where it went from there.

Killer bike alert: the only rider to overtake us all day (pesky flats) was a totally ripped older dude riding a tricked out Serrotta. Full carbon frame, carbon cranks, ultra light brakes, carbon bottle cage – the works; a paltry 16lbs. He weighed just 140lbs. The way I figure it, he, his bike, and two full bottles weigh less than I do. I still give him “props” though because his body fat must be <2%. And, the dude could ride!