

Ride The Rockies

Getting there!

Saturday, June 8th, 2013

Today was the pre-start to the ride. We took a cab to Ward Road Park n Ride where we caught a bus to Telluride. The truck that is to transport the bikes was late but finally arrived. The ride was beautiful, but long, putting us in Telluride at 4:30. We stayed in Peaks at the Mountain Resort about a 20 minute bus ride from town, Beautiful setting but we got there too late to take advantage of it. Oh, Well. Ready to Ride!

Day 1

Telluride to Cortez, 75 miles

Stats

3 hours 30 minutes riding time
20.3 mph average speed
41.2 mph top speed
2,165 calories burned
141 bpm average heart rate
170 bpm maximum heart rate

Beautiful ride, pretty easy day. Only climb was lizard Head Pass, 10,200 feet, but it was first think in the morning and nice and cool. Downhill for the most part after Lizard Hill Pass to Cortez. Weather – perfect blue skies with light breeze.

After ride events: Stayed at the Rodeway Inn, a little dive but cheap and within walking distance to tent city. Room wasn't ready when we road in at 12:00 so rode to tent city and had a "recovery ale" from O'Dell's and a wood baked pizza. After we checked into room, showered and we walked back to the events and hung out with Dan and Amy. George Hincapie was interviewed by Ron Kiefel and that was very interesting and entertaining. We then Indian fry bread with calabacitas – yum. Back in hotel by 6:30 to wind down for the night., Ready to head to Durango tomorrow.

Day 2

Cortez to Durango, 64 miles

Stats

3 hours 44 minutes riding time
16.7 mph average speed
40.3 mph top speed
1,969 calories burned
147 average heart rate

Another beautiful ride. Lot more climbing that yesterday. On some busy roads with rumble bumps – kind of a pain when passing and because of all the climbing we were passing a lot of people. Mike got a front flat and pulled a muscle in his thigh. Hope he feels OK tomorrow. Stayed at the Best Western – hot room but did have a pool.

After ride events: The setup was odd. They had music and beer at Butcher park and speakers at the high school. We never made it to the high school. Had lunch at the Himalayan Kitchen – good Indian food. Went back to the park and had a beer and listened to some music, then headed back to the hotel for a dip in the pool. Did a load of wash and had burritos for dinner and called it a night. God this room is hot. I am sweating sitting here writing this. Going to make for a rough night's sleep. Ready for a hard long ride tomorrow. Oh boy!

Day 3

Durango to Pagosa Springs (not a direct route so 86 mile day)

Actual distance 90 miles

Other stats

5 hours 4 minutes riding time

17.7 mph average speed

41.2 mph maximum speed

2,340 calories

137 average heart rate

162 maximum heart rate

The weather again was fabulous. Started off a little cold but quickly warmed up, Strong winds didn't occur until we finished the ride. Did have a nice tail wind coming into Pagosa Springs. The route was beautiful with only one stretch of road with heavy truck traffic. Neither Mike nor I had any mechanical or physical issues. I felt great riding. Keeping hydrated and seem to be eating enough.

After ride events: This was a bit frustrating. We arrived at the RtR headquarters only to realize that our B&B was way out of town on some dirt roads. The chart bus refused to take us out there so we contacted Alpine Cyclery and Laura ended up driving us herself. Although we are very far from festivities the place we are staying is gorgeous. There are 17 of us staying in the B&B and the owners are a delightful couple. We asked about dinner and they hadn't planned on having us for dinner although she said it would not have been a problem if she was told we would like that. Anyway Valerie (the owner) said she would take us to town at 5:30. More to come. [On a side note Mike just got a text message that the Royal Gorge area is on fire and they've closed the route we were supposed to take in a few days. More to come on the development.]

We had a nice dinner (Valerie took us to a restaurant) then called in a night. Had pancakes and off to ride.

Day 4

Pagosa Springs to Alamosa, 91.3 miles

Stats

5 hours 38 minutes riding time

16.1 mph average speed

42.3 mph maximum speed

2,608 calories burned

137 average heart rate

160 maximum heart rate

This proved to be a challenging day. We started off on a 24-mile climb up Wolf Creek Pass although it was only 8 miles of hard climbing. I felt great on the climb and met a young woman from Canada – now living in Colorado Springs. We climbed together and talked a bit. It took me exactly one hour to climb the steep 8 miles – happy with the pace. Then we thought it would be an easy 70 miles to Alamosa – WRONG. The initial descent into South Fork was pretty fast although to had to be careful due to traffic and road hazards. From South Fork to Alamosa it was tough. The winds were very strong and the descent was very gradual, mostly flat. We did have a milk shake in Del Norte which tasted great at the time but caused some distress after 20 miles. In Monte Vista they were handing out local potatoes that were purple in color and full of vitamin C and antioxidants. They were yummy and gave us the energy needed for the last 20 miles. We are staying in the Best Western and so far it is my favorite room. We spend time in the hot tub and pool and our air conditioner actually works. Yay! We are getting ready to head down to the festivities and find some Italian food.

Worried about the fires in Canon City and Colorado Springs. They are going to have to change the route but we haven't heard yet what the tour will do. Black Forest is also on fire with >100 houses burned. Poor Colorado and poor people who have lost their homes.

Day 5

Alamosa to Salida 86.8 miles

Stats

4 hours 20 minutes riding time

20.2 mph average speed

47.5 maximum speed

1,900 calories burned

132 average heart rate

157 maximum heart rate

Today we got an early start. Left Alamosa at 6:20, which turned out to be a good decision. The first 6 miles were flat and no wind. Made great time., Going up Poncha Pass was a breeze thanks to a very nice tail wind. The descent into Poncha Springs was very fast but very windy, so I had to be careful. I was getting thrown around a but in the wind and once I reached 47+ MPH I decided that was fast enough under the circumstances. Mike topped 50 mph but he too held back due to the winds and traffic. We got to the Budget Lodge hours before our luggage arrived. If I was ever envious of the campers, well this was the equivalent to that experience. Then they say "budget" they are not lying.

Anyway just took a shower after grabbing lunch at the “Eatery” right next door (couldn’t walk too far in our biking shoes). Now we are headed downtown to see the sights. More to come.

Back from a fun time downtown. We watched some kayaking and had a beer at the Boathouse. Then we went to Amica’s restaurant. We met some nice people – Scott and Maggie – and also sat next to a young couple who had also stayed at the Canyon Crest Lodge in Pagosa Springs. We found out that the route for tomorrow had changed due to the wildfires. It was planned on being a 67 mile ride, but the new route is 94 miles. It is going south through Westcliff and over Hardscrabble Pass. Well we at least will gain bragging rights because with the additional 30 miles this will be the longest RtR ever. Let’s see what I think about it tomorrow after the longest and hardest ride that is planned. My allergies have been terrible all week and the smoke is not going to help, Well better get all the stuff ready for tomorrow and go to bed.

Day 6

New route – Salida to Canon City, 94 miles

Stats

- 5 hours riding time
- 18.8 mph average speed
- 41.7 maximum speed
- 2,220 calories burned
- 133 average heart rate
- 158 maximum heart rate

What a day! I woke up with puffy eyes (allergies really acting up) and was quite tired, but got on the bikes about 6:15. Weather was perfect for a long hard day. Could cover, cool, and we beat most of the traffic and riders. It was so beautiful! The roads were a bit rough most of the ride. When we turned off of HWY 50 we had a very steep climb for a number of miles on chip seal. We also climbed over Hardscrabble pass and although long, was not very steep going up. It was, however, great descent but being unfamiliar with the road we took it slower than we would have. We got to Canon City without any bike issues but of course arrived before the vendors were set up. We found our day bag and at least were able to change and sponge off. Now, after having lunch I’m sitting in the grass getting eaten by bugs waiting for the bus to take us to Cheyenne Mt. Resort at 3:00.

Cheyenne Mt. Resort – Awesome!!

What a place. We arrived around 4:15, have showered, drinking a beer and enjoying the luxury, Just getting organized before heading to the main lodge for dinner., We are staying in the Clear Creek Lodge – very appropriate since Clear Creek is one of our favorite bike trails in Denver. More to come after dinner.

We ended up eating a big plate of nachos and a kale salad in the bar. After a couple beers we headed back to the room to call it a night. In bed by 7:30 with the alarm set for 4:30 to catch the bus back to Canon City in morning for day 7 ride.

Day 7

Canon City to Colorado Springs, shortest day6 of the tour – 47 miles

We got on the 5:00 am bus and therefore were on our bikes at 6:15 – heading out.

Stats

47.5 miles
2 hours 36 miles riding time
18.3 mph riding time
38.4 mph maximum speed
1,218 calories burned
138 average heart rate
160 maximum heart rate

Nice ride, fast, many steep rollers. We made it to Cheyenne Mountain Resort by 9:00. Mike's bike was not shifting well but we made it without any major issues. He will need to put some money into it to get it back in good shape. We were able to get our bikes packed up by 9:30 – went back to the room to shower and pack and then had hearty breakfast. After checking out we had to haul our luggage and bike boxes up a major hill – Oh well.

The next few hours we enjoyed a beer, ice cream, good music and waited for the closing ceremony, hoping to win a new bike but no such luck. Now on the bus waiting to head back to Denver. Fun week.

General stats/Information.

Miles – longest in RtR history – 548.
>22,000 feet of elevation gain
85% green containment (minimal carbon footprint left by 2,200 riders)

Based on my mileage (due to hotel distance, I recorded 548.6 miles)

Calories burned riding – 14,420 (doesn't take into account metabolic calories – these are just tracked while riding)

I'm hungry

Great routes for the most part. Felt great every day. Logistics were at times challenging. Overall really fun,