



My PBP 2007

by Bob Barday

When I compare my previous PBPs to this year's, I am reminded of the lyrics to the Kingston Trio song, Raspberries, Strawberries: "A young man goes to Paris, as every young man should. There's something in the air of France that does a young man good."

"An old man returns to Paris, as every old man must. He finds the winter winds blow cold. His dreams have turned to dust."

PBP 2003 was a fantastic experience—the highlight of my cycling life. Therefore, my expectations for 2007 were sky high. Although it did not exactly turn my dreams to dust, it certainly did not live up to my expectations.

Pre-Ride

Several things happened beforehand that negatively impacted the event:

I have a baker friend in Tremblay Les Villages who was planning on retiring, making PBP 2007 the last one he would be supporting. Unfortunately, the route was changed so that it did not return through Tremblay like it did in previous years. Also, several of my best cycling companions announced that 2007 would be their last PBP. Finally, work commitments immediately before the trip limited my training, deprived me of sleep, and put me under a lot of stress.

In spite of these negatives I was very much looking forward to riding unsupported this time and spending a lot of time savoring the French cuisine on the return leg from Brest to Paris.

The trip to Paris was uneventful. The weather was perfect. I was able to get in some very pleasant training miles with Rex Farnsworth and Charlie Henderson. And I really enjoyed visiting with a growing list of friends I had met on previous 1200 kilometer brevets.

On the day of the ride I thought that I had caught up on my sleep and was both physically and mentally prepared. However, the weather forecast was ominous, and by the time of my 10PM ride start, it was cold and raining.

Day 1 – Monday and Tuesday

In previous PBPs I had chosen the 5AM start time in order to minimize sleep disruption. But this year I wanted to experience the full 90 hours of the event, which required a 9PM start. After waiting in line for over an hour I was off with the peloton at 10:00. The start was exactly as I had imagined it would be, but the rain and wet pavement greatly magnified the danger in having so many adrenaline-charged cyclists riding in large groups.

My friend in Tremblay welcomed the cyclists as usual with free water and coffee. However, I had time for only a brief visit. I had been hoping to spend a substantial amount of time visiting with him on my return trip to Paris, but the route change made that impossible.

By the time I reached Mortagne Au Perche it was pouring

Results: September 22nd Stove Prairie 200K: Fastest (and Sunniest?) 200K Yet!

by John Lee Ellis

A record 21 starters basked in brilliant sun as they proceeded to scorch the course. The fastest riders broke the previous course record (6:22 in 2005), and most everyone had quite a good day.

Gold-flecked foliage just beginning to turn at lower elevations punctuated the course, and the crystal clear air made everything seem clean and bright. Once again Ronalee Foss's husband Paul graciously provided assistance, in the form of chilled water at Stove Prairie, all the more welcome after baking up the strenuous 14-mile climb.

Quite a contrast to the chilly, showery, windy, and sleet-prone conditions of May's Stove Prairie 200K.

A big welcome to the six riders doing their first brevet ever, and to veteran endurance cyclist Brian Rapp, who just moved here from California. We were also joined by three Paris-Brest-Paris '07 finishers (Brian, Tom Knoblauch, and JLE), who precisely a month before were zeroing in on the finish line at St. Quentins-en-Yvelines!

A final congratulations to everyone riding the 2007 brevets on what we hope was a successful, fun, and rewarding season.

RUSA#	Time	Rider
2856	6:15	Rudolph, Steve
	6:15	Kraychy, Jim
	6:15	Kalisch, Tim
2444	6:46	Benoit, Diane
	6:56	Knoblauch, Tom
	7:05	Bartow, Don
153	7:21	Howe, James
	7:21	Ellis, John Lee
	7:24	Rapp, Brian
1468	7:52	Struzeski, Kevin
	7:52	Koenig, Andrea
	7:55	Snaveley, Henry
3551	7:56	Hoff, Peter
	8:06	Aleda, Kathryn
	8:10	Guastella, Keith
4528	8:30	Shields, Dan
2442	8:36	Nawrocki, Dave
4519	9:19	Cochenour, John
	9:53	Sutton, Leslie
	9:53	Levine, Anna
3147	10:47	Foss, Ronalee

rain. There were so many people at the control that I decided to continue on without stopping, not even to refresh the water in my camelback.

By the time I reached Villaines La Juhel it was well past sunrise and the rain had stopped. But I was cold and

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Barday, from p. 1

dehydrated. I was also having a very difficult time staying awake—a condition that would haunt me for most of the ride.

Before reaching the control, I rode through the town without stopping at any of the numerous cafes, boulangeries, or small stores for water. At the control there was a line for water so I departed mistakenly thinking that there would be additional places to buy water on the way out of town. I was wrong. I did manage to find a tabac and have my first café noir of the event, but no water. I ran out of water in my camelback almost immediately after leaving.

Down the road in Hardages I was desperate for water. Fortunately a boulangerie was open, and I was able to replenish my water and purchase a ham and cheese sandwich. I had learned my lesson. From this point on I replenished my water at every opportunity. I never ran out of water again, and I never had to buy water at a control.

But the issue of staying awake continued to plague me. I found that I could go about one hour on a small café noir. After an hour my mind would wander, my speed would drop, and I would end up weaving down the road. Therefore, for the rest of the ride I spent a lot of time in cafes and tabacs, something I was planning to do a lot of on my return trip when I had a lot of time in the bank, but not on the outbound trip to Brest.

Most of the trip from Hardages to Loudeac was uneventful and actually somewhat pleasant. The rain had mostly stopped, and I managed to hang with several pacelines during the times my caffeine levels were high enough to keep me alert. It was only in the last few miles of ride into Loudeac in the dark that the rain returned with vengeance, making all my clothes good and wet and ensuring that they wouldn't dry out during the rest of the event.

I had reserved a hotel room in Loudeac, and Charlie's son Peter had transported a drop bag for me. I was able to shower, get my typical 1.5 hours of sleep, eat breakfast, and change shorts and jerseys. What a treat! Unfortunately it was cold, and I needed to continue using my wool undershirt which was wet from sweat and rain and for which I did not have a change. It also made me sad to learn that Charlie had been forced to abandon the ride.

Day 2 – Wednesday

For me, Wednesday (not night) was clearly the best day of the ride. On the leg from Loudeac to Brest there was a headwind for most of the way, but the sky was blue, and I had a good time when I was awake. After nightfall, however, things went in the proverbial toilet.

First of all, heavy rain returned, soaking my clothes all over again. Secondly, the heavy rain and black night made direction finding difficult. Compounding this difficulty was what seemed to me to be a dearth of direction arrows, forcing cyclists to ride long distances without knowing for sure that the route they were on was correct. What cruel and unusual punishment! I managed to stay on route by staying with large groups of riders, but it made me extremely nervous knowing that I could find myself miles off the route at any time.

Thirdly, I had the worst case of chain suck ever in one of the darkest, wettest, and most complicated sections of the route. I was using a worthless plastic device to prevent just that problem, but it happened anyway—with a vengeance. I shifted down to my small chain ring and began noticing that it was getting harder and harder to pedal. By the time I got off the bike I couldn't pedal at all. The chain was so jammed between the chain rings and chain stay that it took me ten minutes to somehow get it loose by using all the strength I could muster. At several points during those ten minutes I really thought that my ride was over. But finally the chain came loose without breaking, and the bike was still rideable.

I finally arrived in Loudeac in the wee hours of Thursday morning, took a shower and went to bed for another 1.5 hour sleep cycle.

Day 3 – Thursday

After waking up I put on my predominately wet clothes. The only dry clothing I had was a pair of socks and shorts. I put them on, along with my wet wool undershirt, my driest jersey, a second pair of wet shorts and jersey, a cheap sweater I had purchased before the ride, and every other piece of clothing I had with me except for the third pair of wet shorts and jersey. I was that cold! I ate breakfast and headed for Paris in the rain.

Overall this was probably the most trying day of the ride. There were a few high points, but overall it was not a good day. I found myself cursing on several occasions.

My first cursing episode occurred on the ride into Forgers. The route entered the city and then made a sharp right turn out of the city on a steep down hill. Had I missed the control? At that point it sure looked to me like I had, but other riders went down the hill like lemmings without hesitation, so I eventually joined them. I had not missed the control, but what followed was another horror. We had to climb an even steeper hill back into the city to reach the control. I was angry—first for the doubt that the exit from the city had planted in my brain and second for the physical pain caused by climbing that darn hill. Was this sadistic detour really necessary?

My second cursing episode came on the route to Hardages. I was looking forward to descending the same hill that we had climbed up on the outbound leg, the same hill on which Charlie was forced to abandon the last PBP. But again they changed the route to add more climbing. The new route descended on another road, then climbed and climbed until making a short decent into Hardages. Why were they doing this to me?

My third cursing episode had nothing to do with a route change. I just did not remember all the climbing getting back to Mortagne. It was dark and raining. I was cold; my knees were bothering me, and I was developing a severe case of Shermer's neck, when your neck becomes so tired that you can't hold your head up. And all I was doing was climbing this endless hill. At that point if someone with a vehicle big enough for my bike had offered me a ride, I would have abandoned the ride right there—no question about it.

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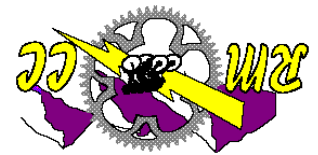


Upcoming Club Rides. Please Contact Jim Kraychy at 303-264-9090 to start a ride.

Date	Start	Description	Miles	Starter
Saturday 10/6 9:45	Lyons	St. Vrain Canyon, Ward, Lefthand Loop	47	Jim Kraychy: 303-264-9040 jkraychy@aol.com
Sunday 10/7 9:45	Boulder	Hygiene, Lyons, Apple Valley <i>Populaire</i>	55/80	Dan Shields: 720-989-4583
Saturday 10/13 9:45	Exit 255	Boedecker Lake, Stove Prairie, Rist Canyon Loop	38/85	Will deRosset: 970-498-8714 wmderosset@gmail.com
Sunday 10/14 9:45	Aurora	Bennett, 88 th Avenue, Strasburg & return	43/71	Cary Stewart: 717-207-4380 pfwaterdude@yahoo.com
Saturday 10/20 9:45	Littleton	Deer Creek, Parmalee Gulch, Evergreen, High Drive & return	33/49	Tim Kalisch: 303-373-9152 timk303@hotmail.com
Sunday 10/21 9:45	Northglenn	Dacono, Ft. Lupton, Hudson, Barr Lake Loop	45/62	Cary Stewart: 717-207-4380 pfwaterdude@yahoo.com
Saturday 10/27 9:45	Larkspur	Larkspur, Palmer Lake, Monument, Black Forest Loop	60	Tom Dubel: 719-491-6189 tubdel@rapxpress.com
Sunday 10/28 9:45	Northglenn	Broomfield, Morgul-Bismark, Cherryvale, Erie & return	46	Dan Shields: 720-989-4583
Saturday 11/3 9:45	Rooney Rd.	Red Rocks, Kittredge, Tiny Town, Deer Creek Loop	44	Volunteer Needed
Sunday 11/4 9:45	Exit 243	Carter Lake, Loveland, Champion Loop	40/60	Volunteer Needed
Saturday 11/10 9:45	Northglenn	Northglenn, Erie Loop	43	Volunteer Needed
Saturday 11/17 9:45	Aurora	Bennett & return	39	Cary Stewart: 717-207-4380 pfwaterdude@yahoo.com
Saturday 11/24 9:45	Boulder	Morgul, Cherryvale, Lookout Loop	24/34	Volunteer Needed

Northglenn	The Wagon Road Park & Ride at 120 th and Huron (just west of I-25)
Boulder	The East Boulder Community Center on 55 th just east of the US 36/South Boulder Road exit. 5660 Sioux Dr. Note: Use the "additional" lot to the west of the main building.
Aurora	The NW corner of the Wal*Mart parking lot just north of I-70 and Tower Road.
Lyons	The Park-n-ride at the corner of 4 th and Broadway in Lyons, just west of the visitors' center.
Littleton	The northwest corner Park-n-Ride at the northwest corner of Santa Fe and Mineral.
Exit 255	Parking lot at the SW corner of the I-25/Exit 255 interchange, 42 miles north of Denver.
Larkspur	The City Park parking lot ¼ mile north of the main intersection of Perry Park Rd & Spruce Mtn Road in Larkspur
Exit 243	Convenience store at the NE corner of the Exit 243/I-25 interchange, 30 miles northeast of Denver Note: use only the lot to the west of the store. Overflow parking is in the street in the back.
Rooney Road	The Green Mountain Trailhead parking on Rooney road, 2 miles south of Colfax.

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Barday, from p. 2

Somehow I made it back to Mortagne, but I was now only an hour ahead of the cut-off time. So I only took a one-hour nap, hoping to rest my knees and get some strength back in my neck. My legs ached so much I was unable to sleep much, however.

Day 4 – Friday

With sore knees and my neck hanging like an overcooked noodle, I departed on the last leg of my journey to Paris. After sunrise I rigged a head support by tying my Sam Brown belt to the back of my helmet, pulling it tight and sitting on the other end. It provided little help, but it improved my morale somewhat to think that I was doing something to help.

My fourth cursing episode of the PBP occurred because of the endless ride into the Dreux control. Why had they changed it? Here on this endless rolling prairie where I found myself riding, there were no familiar landmarks—in fact there were no landmarks at all. For what seemed like an eternity there was no town in sight, and the clock was running out.

When I finally arrived at the outskirts of Dreux and reached the first turn to the control my time had almost run out, but I kept pedaling like a mad man. I knew I had some extra time because my starting wave was retarded from the 9PM start, but I didn't know how much, so I kept pedaling for what seemed like another eternity until I reached the control. At the control they told me that I was okay, but I needed to get back to Paris by 4:30PM. I thought I had plenty of time so I stayed at the control for a relatively leisurely snack. When I returned to

my bike I discovered that my mirror and the nut to my pump were missing.

I remember that the first part of the ride from Dreux to Paris seemed to be predominately along bike paths. Then as we merged back on the original route we seemed to go in circles. I thought I went through the same intersection several times, but of course I couldn't see very well with my chin on my chest.

I thought several times that the motorcycle riders patrolling the course were going to force me to abandon, but apparently I did a good enough job holding my head up when they were beside me that they let me finish. I'm certainly grateful for that.

After the mandatory tour through the suburbs on the final leg of the ride I arrived at the final control. I don't remember the exact time, but it was really close. Then there was a long line at the control that delayed my time another 10 minutes.

In the final analysis I finished the ride. All the route machinations and delays, though stressful to me, did not matter.

Post-Ride

After scraping five pounds of slug guts from the inside of my fenders, I packed my bike and joined my wife for a two week tour of southwestern France, where it was warm and sunny. In two weeks of self supported bicycle touring we rode approximately 225 miles and drank approximately 15 liters of wine between us. That equates to approximately 30 miles per liter of wine per person—not bad for a recovery ride!

In spite of the arduous nature of this particular edition of the PBP, I will go back to France in 2011, seeking the Perfect PBP.