

I wasn't sure how many people would come out and ride this morning. The route itself is challenging with about 7,000 feet of climbing per RWGPS. That's not too bad for a PA ride. However, it seems Bill somehow managed to pack about 6,500 of those vertical feet into one 20 mile section! Further, Dillsburg really isn't the best known city in the world. We don't even have a clothing store unless Tractor Supply counts. I figured that I could at least accompany John and keep him from getting lost. I rode from home to the start and was quite pleasantly surprised to see cars with bikes in the Sheetz parking lot. Woo Hoo! I learned that there would be five of us to start and we would pick up Bill somewhere along the way.

We took off into a cool, grey morning but warmed up quickly with the climb to Franklinton. As expected, the group made good progress in the early miles. We met up with Bill on the north side of Gettysburg. He was riding his Woodbine – Gettysburg – Woodbine populaire and would finish his ride down to Woodbine on a wobbly wheel and nearly broken shift cable. At least the sun finally came out.

As we moved through the Gettysburg control headed south we talked about meeting Carol and few others headed north somewhere along the way. They started from Woodbine and were riding the same 210k route but in reverse. We didn't see her on our way south; but, after passing through New Windsor, MD, we did see some hills – Buffalo Road, Roop Road, Cabbage Spring Road, Watersville Road, and several other “scenic” roads. We were joking (when we could talk) that this route was a bit different than usual – on this route, the PA section is flat and the mountains are in MD.

At the turn around in Woodbine I recalled the climb out of town with some dread. It is a five mile grinder which escalates a few hundred vertical feet. Fun. And of course, we would tackle it in full sun at high noon. We left the control, geared down, and started pedaling. Thankfully, we picked up a tailwind which would accompany us the rest of the day.

We did finally find Carol around mile 100 (for us) and stopped to chat for a few minutes. She had great timing as far as I'm concerned – I was ready for a break! After chatting, we pedaled into the Gettysburg control for the second time. We took slightly longer break since we had time in the bank. Regardless, the final miles up to Dillsburg were covered in good time although the last few hills did remind us that we really were in Pennsylvania. As we coasted downhill through Dillsburg to the final control the smile on John's face made it all worthwhile. Great job John - your R-5 is now complete!

Thanks again everyone!

-Jon Erwin