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Everest Challenge race report

george vargas

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Hello everyone:

You know I always end up asking myself "Why did I sign up for this ride? What the heck was I thinking?".

This weekend was the Everest Challenge the California/Nevada State Climbing Championship. A climbing suffer fest if there was one. A two day stage race. Three major climbs each day no flat land in between and high altitudes to boot. As a "flat-lander", (that's what they call us San Diego riders) anything over 8,000 feet was an issue for me. A truly epic weekend of climbing.

So how did I do? Well the Cat 5 field was about 50 strong and I was in the bottom half. My goal was to finish since 9 out of 19 didn't finish last year. I had been sick for about 10 days leading up to the event and I was in the last 3 days of a 7 day antibiotic prescription for sinus infection. I spent most of Saturday clearing my sinuses. I was very nauseous on Saturday at the top of the third climb and couldn't do my usual recovery. But I lined up Sunday and finished. There are more details if you would like them. BTW, gearing was Compact 50/34 with a 12-27.

What follows is race report.

The Stats:

Total Miles: 206 miles
Total Elevation gain: 29,035 feet

Day One starts outside of Bishop at Millpond Park, 4,425'.

1. The first climb is up to Mosquito Flat. At 10,250' it is the highest paved road in the Sierras. The climb is 22 miles, average grade is 5%. Maximum grade lower half 9%, upper half 11%.
2. "Short climb" up Pine Creek to 7,420' in 8 miles, average grade is 7%, max is 9%, extended sections of 8%.
3. Climb up to South Lake to 9,835' in 20.4 miles, average grade 6%. However, the bottom half had extended sections of 8-9% grade, max

grade 9%. While this was not the highest spot or most vertical gain, the last mile had sections around 15% grade (via Capri stuff) and certainly tested my strength and endurance and desire to stay on the bike (using the quote from the website--quite fitting). By this time you have climbed over 15,000 feet and you are pretty tired and at high altitude. Total climbing for Day One is 15,465' in 120 miles.

Day Two starts outside Big Pine starting elevation 3,940'

1. Climb up towards the Palisade Glacier. elevation 7,800'. The climb is 9 miles with an average grade of almost 8% (max is 11%). There are extended portions of 9-10%.
2. Waucoba Canyon to 6,545' in 8.5 miles, average grade 5% (max just touches 12% in the roller in the "narrows", 11% in one corner before that).
3. Climb up to the Ancient Bristlecone Pine Forest at 10,100' in 21 miles, (I'll do the math for you this climb was 6200 feet of elevation gain in one shot) average grade 6% (max in the lower half is just touches 14%, max in the upper half just touches 17%). There are dozens of 9-12% rollers in the bottom third. The last 3 miles averages 10% grade.

Total climbing for Day Two is 13,570' in 86 miles.

This brings the two day total to 29,035' (the elevation of Mount Everest) in 206 miles.

Things I learned:

1. Well I can't afford a Hypo? tent so I may have to camp out above 9000 feet for months with Grizzly Adams if I am to even place in the top 10 of this event.
2. Don't try to compete with 130lb weight weenies when I weigh 155lb.
3. Don't get sick before a major climbing event. (ok can't help that unless I get a plastic bubble).
4. There is nothing in San Diego County to prepare you for the Everest Challenge.

I'm sure there's more...

george

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