

I don't often sit and construct an open letter to our members and readers, but I feel compelled this evening, likely due to a combination of events and their timing.

Today was the 3<sup>rd</sup> annual Jonathan R. Dechau memorial Time Trial in Rushville. It rained all day and wasn't a day most would find inspiring to grab their gear and head out to a small town south of the city to turn the pedals in anger for a few bucks in prize money. But a few did and we had a great event. Full Moon Vista, as usual, poured their blood, sweat, money and souls into helping create an event that is – well, an event and not just another Thursday night TT. Pedallars' Bob Deroo always comes out too and lends a hand in whatever we need to pull off a smooth event. It is through the gracious efforts of Jon-boy's friends and family that we can honor him by holding such an event to raise money for opportunities for the next generation of elite athletes in our area.

Since Jon's tragic day almost three years ago I have been committed to keeping his memory and one of his passions alive. This event is a TT because as much as Jon was a complete rider he especially loved the TT. Jon also just loved cycling – and he loved racing with his friends. He developed a passion for lending a hand to upcoming riders and that has is the mission with this event. Seeing his friends and family come out to the race – even in the rain, shows the unquenchable love we all had for him and how he touched all of our lives. I know that many of our GVCC members never knew Jonboy, and since that terrible day three years ago we have gained many new members who never even heard of Jonathan Dechau. The time trail is just an event with a name on it to many now. But it is so much more so some of us.

When I see the lessening number of riders coming out to race it each year, it reminds me how fast our memory fades and maybe it is just me holding onto my friend, not quite ready to let everyone forget him that isn't willing to watch it fade so fast. The sharp pain of his passing is dulled now and people's lives go on. New riders come out and don't know the talented athlete, the great friend, the son that made his parents proud or the proud dad and loving husband he became. But as racers we can ALL honor his memory by racing hard, being true competitors on the road and true to our friends at all times.

Looking out at a field of four cat 4 riders today, I wonder, where is the passion? That passion that drove Jon to be a, elite level rider? When I see more guys at club races than sanctioned races against a bigger pool of talent, I wonder why there isn't the hunger to compete – to test the limits. Jon was a fierce competitor and raced any race he could; time trial, road race or crit – he kitted up and gave his best. We raced in sleet and hail and 95 deg weather. It didn't matter – he was a bike racer. He had grit and tenacity. If you didn't attack, he would. And if you did first, he would counter attack you – repeatedly until someone blew a gasket. I NEVER heard him complain about the weather if there was a race and he often would say, "This race is perfect for me".

I want to see more people get the passion of cycling. To understand that it is about being tough and smart – not a fair weather rider who sits in the pack waiting for a field sprint that they never win, or just mindlessly towing the group around for an hour. Cyclists should be the blue collar sportsman – no half time, no sitting the bench - men and women of grit and strong will and athletes of extraordinary character and tenacity. That means, HARD races, long races and races in all conditions and having that burning hunger to compete.

Kit up GVCC and get some passion. Race like champions and make Jon proud and honor his legacy.