



WINDBUSTERS

December 2023

Important Dates

December 12 PBBA Christmas Light Ride

March 22-24, 2024 Rattlesnake Gravel Grind

September 21-22, 2024 Fort Davis Cyclefest





CHRISTMAS LIGHT RIDE

Tuesday, December 12, 6:30 pm

Ride off promptly at 7:00

Address: 5921 Pedernales Drive (clubhouse), Midland

An opportunity for riders of all ages to tour the Christmas lights in the Grasslands subdivision by bicycle.

The ride will be a slow pace through Grassland Estates and will last just about an hour depending on weather. Headlights are required by law for a night ride.

There will be prizes for the best decorated bicycles. After the ride, please join us in the clubhouse for snacks.

Refreshments will be provided by Trek of Midland.

See you there!

Note: This is family friendly ride so children are welcome. Please stay informed of the forecast and dress as warmly as needed. Gloves and jackets may be a must! Decorating your bike is not required so please don't let the constraints of the holidays prevent you from participating. Thank you to John and Bobbie Kerrigan for leading this ride. Thank you to Trek for funding the refreshments. Thank you to Landy Adkins for reserving the clubhouse. Come join us!





VETERANS GRAVEL GRIND 2023

By Rachel Harvey

“November’s a burn and an ache.” -- Charles Wright, *Indian Summer II*

SATURDAY, NOVEMBER 11, 2023

While Veterans Day was no taste of an Indian Summer, with a single cloud blanketing the morning sky and every panoramic view painted in a sepia wash, the early hours held a quiet buzz of activity at Lake Colorado City State Park. The second annual Veterans Gravel Grind, presented by ViM Racing with benefaction towards bike packing organization TrailWarrior, geared up to kick off its Full, Half, and Quarter Grind race distances in a mass start. With over 100 registrants, some hailing from Fort Worth, Austin, and Marfa; the 8:00am mass start took shape outside the state park recreation hall. This particular shape, for me, however, encompassed the better part of two days.



I arrived at the state park early Friday afternoon in my usual manner: late, in from Dallas. A fellow teammate, Russell Potter, was kind to bring my gravel bike from Midland so that I could take part in the 2:00pm shakeout ride. There were two shakeout rides on the Friday schedule: a shorter 14-mile length and a 4:00pm 25-mile distance. Russ even had my tires aired! Quick to throw on a kit, I spun over to the recreation hall, our HQ, and waited to see who comprised our shakeout party. Roughly nine were gathering to roll out – small to say the most, but with great depth of company: five teammates and two additional couples. After introductions, Katie Briscoe asked Emily Newsom if she would mind taking a picture with us. And herein lies the exposure of my ignorance: was I supposed to know who this is? I can say this about myself: I know very little about very much; so, it is certainly no discredit to Emily that her name had never lilted across my ears. She politely acquiesced, and we leaned in for a quick snapshot.

WHAT THE TEAM HAD TO SAY.....

"One act of kindness that stuck out to me was from my teammate. I showed up with several layers due to the colder temps, and he gifted me leg warmers, arm warmers, and a vest so I could stay dry. I know the value of that type of gear, so that was really awesome of him to do that. I know I was incredibly thankful. It's a ViM guy helping out a ViM guy." -- Justin Busch

"Funniest thing from Jeff and Randal:
Randal: I've actually sprinted against
Conor on our local group ride.
Jeff: Oh yeah, and how did that work
out for you?
Randal: Uh, I lost." -- Oscar Salazar

"Most memorable moment has to be Erik Burkhart fighting from like 4 minutes back. Catching the leaders with half a mile left in the race and then he has a chance at the spring finish. Epic effort."
-- Jeff Ledford

Off we go: easy pace, clear blue sky, and a greyish landscape a mixture of autumn pasture and hollow brush laid out before us. The West Texas horizon, year-round, boasts a view which presents the serious temptation to be untethered. The entirety of what lay before me I knew was likely to be lost on those racing the following morning. And the gravel..... so brazenly smooth my near virgin gravel-legs (almost as smooth) recognized prime surface conditions and innately knew Saturday morning was going to be fast. I digress. The shape of the weekend began to form. Chatter bounced around the reverberation of the tires' rolling contact. Conversation flowed and exchanged as cyclists danced and cajoled through different permutations. About five miles in, I found myself visiting with Emily. We talked of nothing in particular, but I suppose everything about which two mothers would talk. I learned where she met her husband. Their daughter is eight with long blonde hair the shade underlying a watercolor meadow. I brought it up because my daughter's hair is orange-gold. We spoke of navigating primary school, which demands a near 40-hour work week from these little ones and transitioning to part home school. Emily asked me what junior high girls are like and if it is as fearsome as she's heard. And while cycling and gravel talk never made their appearance, the ease at which she gained the incline of the slight climb up and around the hill did not escape my notice. I was breathing quicker. Not Emily. Soon after, she pedaled on, and I found another and another to quiz.

That Friday evening began race check-in. Temperatures were dropping and a slow drizzle set in. Katie, Anna Coleman, and Jane Windler (Marfa, TX) were busy heating supper in the HQ kitchen. These three ladies took to visiting and preparing the way a comfortable fire wafts the heat to outstretched corners. Oscar Salazar, our race event coordinator, which is not a fully encompassing term, along with Katie, organized supper for those around the HQ. Whereas I am a basic, bare necessities operator, Oscar and Katie are most assuredly the opposite. Their welcoming grace and hospitality will blanket any room.

I covered check-in with Russ' help. Race check-in is the most opportunistic volunteer job to memorize racers' faces. I most certainly don't remember all the names but faces fill the rolodex to flip through again and again and again. Friday night I ate with (and quizzed) a couple from Lubbock, local trails and upkeep there, how they got into gravel, weighing the pros and cons of jumping from the Quarter grind to the Half. The state park's recreation hall, or the HQ as I so deemed it, was cozy in its hospitality. I approximate 30-40 racers, volunteers, and organizers dined together in a low-lit room, pitch black outside with slow precipitation, and visited over... anything, nothing, everything.



Race Day. 6:00am. Coffee is brewing at the HQ. Oscar, Katie, Clif Coleman, Russ, and myself. Precipitation is still coming down albeit lightly, misting. And it is cold. I knew we lacked at least 30 racers to check-in, so we were anticipating a bit of a last-minute rush. No worry, as Von Doria was primed with finger tapping skills to dominate the app. I hung around check-in for as long as I could, filing away faces to be spotted later in the mass start, the course, and the finish. It is mesmerizing to watch those preparing to race. I examined bikes coming out, cyclists making small adjustments, conversations held quietly-- possibly with recommendations, decisions weighed. Racers pedaling up and down the road, trying to warm up. As mentioned before, the sun was no more. The morning dawned tawny and crisp, more than crisp. The HQ was nestled in a dense grove of brush and mesquite, but once the racers were out in the open, the breeze was going to bite, and the tackiness of the moisture buildup would make itself known.

Race conditions changed overnight, unforecasted. It was what it was. Shrug.

The mass start lined up in quiet determination. Clif, behind the scenes for the most part, welcomed the racers to the event and delivered a brief account of race safety and responsibility. He then turned the microphone over to Jack Henry for a short prayer, followed by the playing of the National Anthem. Jack

Henry volunteered as our race lead out for the Full Grind. During the anthem, I snuck off with our photographer to make sure we hit our first spot, about 4 miles in. All I can say is this: it got fast, fast, and tackiness of moisture buildup is called mud. At mile 4, the scene coming around the corner was loud with breath, air resistance catching the chains moving around the gears, and rolling contact. The sound is addictively low. It is suggestive. It resonates. There were at least nine, maybe ten in the lead group: Erik Burkhart, Conor Steward, Justin McQuerry, Emily Newsom, Zack Belew, Mauri Maldonado, Joaquin Traslosheros, Jordan Hester, Matt Hudson.

This same group was together at mile 8, and after that, I dropped down to the first rest station, manned by Oscar Gomez, Alex MacLennan, Von, along with Braden Belew and Jack Ledford. These guys were the face of aid station heraldry. Designated the first and last station for the Full and Half Grind, their job was lengthy and deserves much applause. We see you!!

By the time the first racers turned this corner, the lead group had broken up a bit. The pace of the lead group remained unchanged, and I admit I was pleased to see Emily still in the mix. The first rest stop is where the Quarter Grind turns north to finish out their distance. At this time, the photographer and I hauled to the finish line to witness our first finishers.

Whether the finish line is the Quarter, Half, or Full Grind distance, the faces of those crossing the line spoke volumes. Everyone who raced left it all on the course, even our short course finishers and our shorter course finishers. We had a group of kids "race" the shakeout short distance and the joy on their faces was BIG at the finish line. To finish, to complete, to fulfill a hard demand is an irreplaceable feeling.



I hung around for the first five cyclists who crossed the line of the Full Grind race. Fortunately for me and my vision, the race had a slightly uphill finish. Not mentioned until now, Randal Morgan and Jeff Ledford tracked and live streamed the race leaders with added commentary. These two rocked the house. What a spectacular way for those spread over the course, those behind the scenes, those at home to tune in and witness the guts left out on the course. There at the finish, Russ, Clif, Zack Belew's wife and daughter, and I were simultaneously watching the live stream and looking into the distance to see the racers' approach, constantly looking back and forth. In an almost unbelievable display of digging deep, guts on the gravel, Erik Burkhart came from behind, seemingly out of nowhere, to close a near 4 minute gap, to take advantage of a chance for a sprint finish and clinch second place. Steward, Burkhart, McQuerry took one, two, three. And fourth place, looking back as she crossed the line, only 5:30 minutes back was Emily Newsom.

I watched the men ride on, as we were a couple miles from the HQ. It was quiet again waiting for the next finishers, Emily and Mauri. And as Emily rode over the line, her family had driven out to meet her. Parked a short distance off, her husband and daughter exited the car and her daughter ran out to her, arms wide, yelling, "Mommy!" I looked away, but I'm sure she did what any mother would do, especially after suffering the duration of the race, holding her own, and sticking it out, up front, for as long as she did and then solo. It all disappeared. I looked back once again, and she was leaning against the car, devastatingly spent, utterly used up, her daughter running in joyful circles and her husband stowing the bike.

I drove back to the HQ to await podiums. Lunch, pizza from Bigg's, locally owned and picked up by Kenneth and Alana Priebe, was served and racers and riders were enjoying once again. All the race perspectives were dished out as well, groups conversing, relaying, replaying. The shape of my Friday and Saturday was a shape of togetherness and community. The Veterans Gravel Grind, held in a small-town locale, carried a big time feel. My rolodex was stacked to bursting. The work put in behind the scenes was made manifest in the racers' response.

"In conclusion, drink tea, together with your friends; pay attention to the tea, and to your friends, and pay attention to your friends paying attention to the tea." – Sarah Perry, *The Essence of Peopling*





Full Grind Male

1. **Conor Steward**
2. **Eric Burkhart**
3. **Justin McQuerry**

Half Grind Male

1. **Casey Hausenfluke**
2. **John Cornejo**
3. **James Newsom**

Quarter Grind Male

1. **Matt Rodriguez**
2. **Matthew Rodriguez**
3. **Jason Pierce**



Full Grind Female

1. **Emily Newsom**
2. **Erin Reedy**
3. **Maggie Chan-Roper**

Half Grind Female

1. **Candace Matthies**
2. **Staci Jones**
3. **Cynthia Caruthers**

Quarter Grind Female

1. **Marissa Wright**
2. **Kelly Hall**
3. **Tamatha Dayberry**





March 22-24, 2024

For details: rattlesnakegravelgrind.bike



PBBA 2023 Officers and Chairpersons

President: Eric Burkhart

Vice President: Clif Coleman

Secretary: Isaac Navarrete

Treasurer: Kye King/ Brent Hoke

Mountain Bike Director: Stephen Mitchell

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