



I owe this record to Kalleen Whitford, Leah Folsom, Kevin Jones, Daniel Sanchez, Douglas Hoffman and Joni Tooke.

Some people may find it hard to believe that the Texas Cross State distance is longer than RAW (857 miles). Believe me. I have done both and Texas is longer.

At 5:00 am on a cold, misty morning which most people consider a stay in bed and snuggle under the covers type of day, 4 crew members, 2 UMCA officials and myself departed the Oklahoma/Texas state line 7 miles

north of Perryton, Texas. Our destination was Mexico, 873 miles away.

My ride is a November Wheelhouse carbon fiber frame, Di2 Ultegra 10 speed, clip on aero bars with bar end electronic shifting and 38 mm carbon clincher wheels with Chris King hubs.

Months of preparatory labor was now going to be put to the test. The gathering of crew, coordination of crew travel arrangements, UMCA record attempt application fees (2), record attempt application checklist, rider waiver, crew waivers, certification of officials, clothing checklists, cold weather clothing checklist, bicycle accessory checklists, first aide

checklist, officials road log sheets, nutrition/hydration checklists, electrical checklists, follow vehicle set up, chargers, inverters, auxiliary vehicle set up, roof racks, nutrition data sheets, spare bike, crew supply checklist, north-south route book, south-north route book, hour chart, rider menu, website updates, budget.....I think I only left a few out.

UMCA record attempt applications/fees with designated start/end points must be submitted at least 21 days in advance. Because Texas weather is so unpredictable, I had submitted (2) applications. One was for a south to north challenge while the other was for a north to south challenge.



Joni, my crew chief studied the weather carefully leading up to our start date of November 11. She elected to take the north to south route. We knew we would have headwinds for the first 250-300 miles but we needed to get away from the Texas Panhandle before a cold front hit, dropping the temps below freezing.

Joni chose the 5:00 am start time based on a 70 to 72 hour completion which would put me in the heavy traffic congestion of the final 70 miles in the wee hours of the night when traffic would be at its' least.

The oil business is booming in the Texas Panhandle. Even at 5:00 am, the roughneck traffic on highway 83 was buzzing. Misty fog with limited sight made it difficult for the dawn sun to penetrate the thick air. The

shoulder on the highway appeared and disappeared while my follow vehicle watched my back.

I am not known for my speed. But what I do take pride in is my consistency. I knew I just had to get in my rhythm, get in my rut, shut up and pedal.

The predicted headwind was there but it wasn't as severe as forecasted. To me, the Texas chipseal was just as much of a battle as the headwind. I swear the chipseal knocks at least 1.5 mph off your average speed.

Joni knew I had to maintain my nutrition. My magic number is 200 calories an hour. Much below that and I bonk. Much above that I puke. I have found a nutrition recipe that seems to work really well for me. I use Skratch Labs portable bread and rice cakes. I supplement those with Heed, Perpetuem solids, Hammergel and processed breakfast bars. For treats I get small flask of Dr. Pepper, Ginger Ale and cherry juice with Emergen C mixed in. The FV (follow vehicle) also has a small rice cooker. Joni or Leah would throw a piece of round, flat bread in the cooker and lay a piece of cheddar cheese on top. I loved those things.

The cold front caught up with us right before Abilene (329 miles). The temperature dropped as gusty 30+ mph cross winds blew me sideways. In the FV headlights I could see sand, debris and Texas size tumbleweeds blowing across the pavement. I had toe warmers inside my shoes hand warmers inside my mittens and a full face bacala. All of this made it difficult to maintain my nutrition.

Vehicle to rider hand-offs were precariously

unstable as the wind blew me sideways. The bulky mittens also made hand-offs difficult as well as very difficult to peel away wrappers from my bread cakes and bars. Even reaching down for a water bottle took



concentrated effort.

I went through the 24 hour mark with 359 miles, a PR for me. I continued to ride to the 30 hour point before my first sleep break in Mason, Texas (456 miles). Joni told me I could take a 1 hour 45 min sleep if I promised to be back on my bike with only 2 hours out of saddle. I promised.



The FV is set up with an iron bed frame. The frame allows for a 14" wide piece of foam on the top and storage shelves below. I removed my long sleeve jacket, my shoes, my helmet and I crawled into my narrow bed space. I slept for 1.75 hours in the parking lot of a Stripes convenience store.

The next 125 miles or so would take me through the Texas Hill Country. Mason, Fredericksburg, Kerrville, Bandera, Hondo. It was between Bandera and Hondo at the 575 mile point that my Garmin lost power. Apparently the data collected overloaded. I guess a human can log more data than a Garmin. It had to be reset in order to power back up. I lost all my data.

Around midnight, my pace was slowing. I was having a difficult time staying awake, I was having a burning sensation, not hot-foot, with my left foot. I stopped. Joni found a fluid build up and blister on the ball of my foot. She made a first aide donut to protect the blister and I put on a thicker pair of socks. She also decided to put me down for a 15 minute power nap, hoping to keep me rolling another couple of hours before another full sleep. I didn't crawl into my bed space. I sat in the rear seat of the FV with a neck pillow and zonked for 15 minutes.

The AV (auxiliary vehicle) crew had gone up ahead and were staying at a motel in Pleasanton. They had rested, showered, ate and slept while they waited to rotate with the FV crew.

I made it to Pleasanton (624 miles) about 2:30 am. Joni again told me I could go down for an hour and 45 minute sleep if I promised no more than 2 hours out of saddle. I

promised. Even though the motel room was right there and while the crew slept in the warmth of the motel room and on the soft bed, Joni made me crawl into my bed space in the FV. I removed only removed my helmet this time. I covered myself with a blanket. Joni left the van running with the heater on. It was the best ultra sleep a racer could ever ask for. By that I mean it was instantaneous from the time my head hit the foam till the time Leah was nudging my shoulder saying, "Dex, it is time to get up. You have to get up." I had no idea any time at all had elapsed. It was a dead sleep.

The most difficult time for an ultra racer to stay awake is the last 3 hours before dawn. That is when most racers sleep. However, if the racer can push through those 3 hours and make it till that sun pops up over the eastern horizon, then the racer has a good chance of getting in several more good hours of racing.

I left Pleasanton at 4:30 am. Even though I just had a dead sleep, I battled staying awake in the pre-dawn hours. I wore a Cardo radio headset that allows communication between rider and crew. Kevin Jones kept talking to me to keep me awake. Kevin and I always enjoy bantering back and forth at each other. He kept telling me what a wuss I was and how lousy I was doing and how he could do it so much better. I kept telling

him that he didn't know anything about ultra cycling, he was the worst crew member a racer could have and he wasn't anything but a pilot on the ground that couldn't ride 100 miles if he had to. At least it kept me awake until the sun came up.

I had a good tail/cross wind from Three Rivers (665 miles) to Kingsville (744 miles). There were long rollers, not too steep. I began to get back in my rut.

Before I had gone down for my sleep in Pleasanton, Joni had promised me a Dairy Queen chicken finger basket with gravy and fries the next day. Now in Alice, Joni telephoned the FV crew that she was stopping at DQ to pick a basket up. Leah gave me the good news over the radio. I thought about it. I really wanted those fingers and that gravy. But I knew it would mean 15-20 minutes lost saddle time. I reluctantly told Leah to cancel the basket. I was awake and I was on a roll. I knew there was going to be no more stopping, no more sleeping. I was headed to Mexico.

The last 120 miles from Kingsville to Mexico was the worst chipseal I have ever ridden. I thought I ridden on bad chipseal around my hometown of Del Rio. I was wishing for Del Rio chipseal. It got even worse from Raymondville to Harlingen. The shoulders were also cluttered with debris, glass and tire remnants. At the 785 mile point the FV picked up an industrial size bolt/nail in the right front tire. It wasn't losing air but Joni knew the second it fell out of the tire would mean immediate deflation. She telephoned the AV to rendezvous. Since it was still daylight and leap frog follow, I was able to keep riding while supplies were transferred from FV to AV.

The auxiliary vehicle transformed into my follow vehicle.



Our original plan was to be arriving the congested traffic during the wee hours of the night. But now I had made such good time that we were arriving right after dusk in heavy traffic. I was on a multi-lane freeway with cars, mostly big trucks, zooming by at 70 mph. Kevin and I were in close communication as he would block for me. "Okay Dex you have merging traffic on your right entering the expressway. Okay Dex you have traffic on your left trying to get to the exit ramp. Okay Dex stay to your left, stay away from the exit. Stay straight, go over the bridge." All the while, I am weaving and dodging

loose debris on the road as they suddenly appear in the headlight beam of the FV. It finally got so stressful for Kevin, myself and Joni that Joni decided to pull me off the expressway and take the service road. The service road brought terrible chip seal and traffic lights every half mile. But at least the traffic wasn't as bad.

The other crew/official had gone ahead to make sure everything was set for the finish at the Mexico border. Doug telephoned Drew Clark, UMCA records chairperson, to make double sure of the end point. He also contacted a Homeland Security official to let them know what was coming their way and to oversee our arrival. I could smell the barn. I pushed hard the last couple of hours. It was as if I was doing stop light sprints. From one to the next. I don't normally like to know how far I have come or how far I have to go. I rarely look at the mileage on a device. I was stopped at a red light. Via the headset, I asked Daniel, the UMCA official, how far till the finish. He replied, "1 mile."

I arrived at 9:36 pm. 873.5 miles. 64 hours and 33 minutes after that cold, misty start in Oklahoma.

The celebration was filled with joy, tears and photos. The photos had to be taken from the direction away from the border as a Federal building would have been in the background. The officer was there to make sure we

didn't forego National security.

This challenge was truly a testimony to the hard work and dedication not only by me but also by the crew. It turned out to be one of my strongest rides in my ultra racing career.

I strongly encourage others to step out there on that limb and chase your dreams. Challenge a cross state record.

It will hurt, it will be difficult and it will be SO worth it.

"There is magic deep in the soul, discover your magic!"

Dex Tooke 383

Kneeling left to right: Kaylleen Whitford, Leah Folsom.

Standing left to right: Kevin Jones, Daniel Sanchez, Joni Tooke, Dex Tooke, Douglass Hoffman





