

Sisters rider takes on 100-mile race

By Andrew Loscutoff
Correspondent

Jason Gulley, a therapist with Green Ridge Physical Therapy, is no stranger to testing his endurance limits. He is a veteran of the Boston Marathon, the High Cascades 100-mile mountain bike race — and now an iconic event in the high country of Colorado.

Gulley, originally from Vermont, is always out for the next big challenge. One event came into his cross-hairs over a year ago — the Leadville trail 100 mountain bike race in Leadville, Colorado. Leadville is the nation's highest elevation incorporated town, at 10,152 feet. With a population of 2,300, it is a similar town to Sisters because of the allure to tourists. It once was a very productive mining town.

The August 6 race is a spectacle of fortitude, crossing the high Rocky Mountain passes, with steep climbs and long sections of dirt jeep roads. It creates an atmosphere of camaraderie, as a tribe of endurance junkies gathers in the thin air to test their limits. The race draws more than 1,600 participants

from all over the world.

Gulley said, "Leadville is a small town. It feels a lot like Sisters. Actually, the race itself seems like the (Sisters Memorial Day weekend mountain bike race) Stampede, except with a much bigger crowd and atmosphere. Riding into town the street is lined with people to cheer us on."

Gulley also mentioned the family culture.

"The whole thing is about family. They mention it in the pre-ride meeting, at the start line, and finish; they welcome you to the Leadville family."

Gulley's journey to the starting line began in Tahoe a season ago as he qualified on time in a 100k race. He circled 2016 on his calendar as the year of Leadville. Then, as things wound down last season, a happy curveball was thrown his way: The pregnancy of his wife, Laura. Due date: a month before Leadville.

With Leadville in the back of his mind, Jason raced the spring season and prepared as he would have otherwise. One month before Leadville he had a local 100-mile event

planned as the last big training piece before Leadville. Instead of resting soundly before a 5 a.m. start, Jason wound up in the hospital to see the birth of his daughter Erin.

Now, his mind completely off Leadville, Gulley took to the joy of being a dad. He took less time to ride, and took to helping out. It wasn't until a few weeks before the race that he decided he would give it a shot. His parents were to come from Vermont to be with their new granddaughter. Jason's plan was to fast-track across the country, beelining to Leadville in two days, racing, then driving home.

When asked about what he could do differently, Gulley said: "Not sleep in the car, avoid sitting for 10 hours the day before. And ride a lot more."

In any case, Gulley had a good result, and a good story to tell. He gave a good depiction of how as miles tick on, the mind often tries to talk itself out of going deeper, the inner quitter stomps its foot and causes a stir. There is tug-o-war between self-preservation and pushing the



PHOTO PROVIDED

Jason Gulley in action in the Leadville 100.

body beyond what it's used to. He laughed as he admitted to his mantra for continuing on: "I commit I will not quit"

The stress of leaving his beloved new family at home, driving on an epic journey, and the stress of it all gave him a crusade. He would not pull out, regardless of the altitude, frustration, and having to get off the bike to hike up the rocky mountain terrain.

Jason acknowledges that this race wasn't ridden under the best circumstances. He is already planning for 2017. He will train with a new perspective, knowing how tough the race will be. Gulley pushed himself to his breaking point, and now looking back as a stronger person.

Agenda

Sisters City Council
City Hall, 520 E. Cascade Ave.

Thursday, August 25
6 p.m. workshop
• Highway 20/Barclay Avenue roundabout decisions
7 p.m. regular meeting
• Public comment and consideration of a motion to adopt the Highway 20/Barclay Avenue Roundabout traffic management, aesthetics, and landscaping options

• Recommendation to the Oregon Liquor Control Commission (OLCC) on the annual renewal of liquor licenses for Sisters businesses.

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