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Teamwork and Racing

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Teamwork and Racing

The Wheels Do Go Round



Looking Backwards So I Can Look Ahead

Two hills, two tracks, two places in time.

This opening might portend an ominous horror movie, but the reality is that it provides me an anchor. For when I was (much) younger, our house sat on a large hill almost right next to a racetrack (motors, not horses). And on those warm summer nights when we would stroll down that hill, we could distinctly hear those engines revving. This never failed to bring me anticipation; I knew an adventure was about to unfold. Many times, this anticipation might be delayed (or heightened perhaps, I am not sure) by adding a round (or two!) of miniature golf on a quaint ‘throwback’ course near the speedway run by “Pops”, It was a relaxed time and it was my time; our time.

Perhaps the recounting of these memories are dull to some, but they represent days of my life growing up in my urban, ‘middle-class’ world. In this ‘world’, the one question to which I never paid much attention was-“Why did I look forward to the sounds, the smells, and the danger?” I believe the answer is buried in a need to compete-not as a physical combatant (I did not *quite* have the desire to be pummeled on the field and my skills at catcher were not good enough to usurp our All-State player) but more so as an observer who let the noise and all the circus soak into my being.

These are memories from long ago. The mini-golf and “Pops” are gone, as are my parents, and I no longer am that young boy on that hillside. But the desire to absorb and feel competition has not died and I believe this is one reason why I was attracted to the UCI’s. My wife and I are armchair voyagers when it comes to world sports such as cycling. Who wouldn’t love to be at the Alpe d’Huez cheering wildly with the crowd? But then again, how many can afford to feel the mist on their skin or peer through the fog for the rush of cyclists as they pass? We are still grounded in realities that are hard to escape when you want a flight of fancy (or two, or three, even).

Flash forward-Richmond 2015. No TDF; it is over. No mountaintops-just Libby Hill and Governor Street. Yet. There is something palpable which has just occurred in a city better known for other times. And, my gosh, was it exciting. My reflections indicate that I perceived a grand experiment happening in a city which tends to be labeled either indecisive or, more generously, just plain slow to decide. In retrospect the decision to bid out our venue must have appeared as a large hill to climb indeed. Our large-scale events have not tended to be 'large-scale' and while we go Nutzy now and then, we lack a bit in sports (Richmond hockey anyone? Or, Braves baseball?) And this was reflected in the comments of many colleagues who did not think it worth the time to go, much less watch any coverage. Cycling?-Why that is so "European" is a comment I can image must have risen in the thoughts of many. Perhaps, even me.

Any doubts I had ended at Browns' Island-we were throwing a party (something we do know how to do) and the world was coming. As we arrived (very early, just in case) it was evident this was huge. The crowd was festive, the weather great, the music joyful, and the politicians were both positive and brief (and it was awesome to be in the greatest state in the union as Governor McAuliffe reminded us several times)

As for the racing portion of the circus, it was above grade. We chose Monroe Park as our hangout for the three days we attended. The hype preceding the race was perhaps less evident here than at Libby Hill or on Broad, but the views were clean, the crowds enthusiastic, and it was somewhat of a (bit muted) party atmosphere. While cowbells were beginning to ring, our first encounter was with a person-cow who asked "Did you see my udders?" Before your mind wanders too far, let me explain that the races had not spawned an alien-hybrid, but merely had deposited a promotional effort for an online farm-to-table operation . It was a nice follow-up to the opening at Browns' Island with matching flags,'speechifying',and a woman dressed in a Swedish flag and horns who was lifting and carrying men.

What would we feel as the first riders went by? What were *they* feeling? Did they see Richmond as just another venue in a long season? Were they thinking about finishing in 48th place? Or was it all a blur-just faces and pavement and cowbells? Did they hear our cowbell that we bought in Germany? Could they see we were ringing so hard that one of us developed what our household now calls 'cowbell finger'? I could add many more racing details-but you know these already. You have seen the coverage, or you were there and you have your own memories. The best experience was to interact with humanity-to be with those who even now are telling their own tales. We have stepped outside of ourselves whether by passively listening to strange (and wonderful) dialects, seeing flags you don't recognize, or finding that person *standing right next to you* who lives where you once lived in a foreign land.

It is all good and all worth it.

I hope we left a great impression. I hope the world comes back.

Student Work

<http://rampages.us/soignolimd/>

- [Villumsen and Appelt Take Gold in UCI Individual Time Trials](#)
- [Belarus Rules the Road](#)
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- [1-2 American Finish](#)
- [Dygert and Ledanois Wins Gold in the UCI Road Circuit](#)
- [Gall Holds Off Betouigt-Suire to Win the Gold Medal](#)
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