

April 2003

**"It never gets easier. You just get faster.
Having to struggle to achieve something makes it all the more satisfying when you succeed."
Greg Le Mond**

Congratulations on being a Finisher in the 2002 California Triple Crown!!

Looking back on this year's Double Series, I hope you have some great memories. I know I do. I remember a full moon illuminating the wide open farm fields at 5:00 A.M. at the start of the Knoxville Fall Classic Double when the bicyclists ruled the road!! Later, we were flying on a great road meandering up and down over small fun hills in Napa Valley. Overhead brightly colored hot air balloons were soaring over the valley floor on a beautiful blue sky morning.

Memories to last a lifetime for sure!! Each of the rides in the California Triple Crown is a **Major Adventure** in itself!!

You are one of a very select group of 363 people completing the 2002 California Triple Crown. You should feel proud of your accomplishment!! Here are some statistics as shown on the enclosed Winners Report:

1 Rider, Merrick Cohn, completed all **14** of the Double Centuries
2 Riders, Lynn Katano and David Evans, completed **11** of the Double Centuries
2 Riders, Paul Kopit and Ron Way, completed **10** of the Double Centuries
4 Riders, John T. Clare, Charles Griffice, Richard Mc Caw, and Graham Pollock, completed **9** of the Double Centuries
5 Riders, Richard Hoff, Jim Kelleher, Jennie Phillips, Craig Robertson, and Brian Tavoian, completed **8** of the Double Centuries
11 Riders completed **7** of the Double Centuries
29 Riders completed **6** of the Double Centuries
42 Riders completed **5** of the Double Centuries
65 Riders completed **4** of the Double Centuries
202 Riders completed **3** of the Double Centuries

In 1990, there were only 32 Winners. In 1991: 75 -- in 1992: 81 -- in 1993:77 -- in 1994:174 -- in 1995:290 - in 1996:273 - in 1997:377 - in 1998: 288 - in 1999:335 - in 2000: 356 - in 2001: 290 - and in 2002, there were 363 Winners.

An article regarding the California Triple Crown, including the enclosed comprehensive list of the finisher's names that has **YOUR NAME ON IT**, is now on our web site at www.CalTripleCrown.com. It is also being submitted to Bicycling Magazine and the Ultra Marathon Cycling Association (UMCA).

You have earned a complimentary California Triple Crown Patch or Refrigerator Magnet. To receive yours, send a Business Size Self Addressed Stamped Envelope at least 4 inches high to: Chuck Bramwell, 4911 Tamarack Way, Irvine, CA 92612. Include a note indicating whether you would like the Patch or Magnet which are shown on the web site at www.CalTripleCrown.com. If you want both the Patch and Magnet, enclose a \$2 check made out to "California Triple Crown Association".

CALIFORNIA TRIPLE CROWN THOUSAND MILE CLUB

"There are days when the bike feels like it doesn't have a chain!!"
Frankie Andreu describing when you have good legs

It's one thing to complete Three Double Centuries in a year - it's a whole other matter to complete Five or more Doubles in a single year. There were 96 cyclists who rode at least One Thousand Miles in Doubles this year!! These select riders will have an additional ribbon added to their Custom Jersey/T-Shirt indicating "Thousand Mile Club". Even more impressive are 31 of those who are members of the 2002 Gold Thousand Mile Club by supporting at least one Double in the series!! See www.CalTripleCrown.com to see who they are. These riders can order a Yellow Custom Jersey and have "Gold Thousand Mile Club" proudly displayed on the Custom Products!!

CALIFORNIA TRIPLE CROWN STAGE RACE

"Machines don't break records. Muscles do."

Lon Haldeman

1982-1983 Race Across America Winner and the nicest guy you'll ever meet

As most of you know, we started a California Triple Crown Stage Race in 1996 and the 2002 results are below. To compete in the Stage Race, you had to complete three of the most difficult Doubles: Devil Mountain, Central Coast, and the Terrible Two. The Total Elapsed Time for all three rides was then computed and the rider with the fastest overall time was declared the Winner.

Rank	Last Name	First	Age	City	Devil	Central	Terrible	Time
					Mountain	Coast	Two	Back
1	BRAUCH	RUPERT	32	SAN JOSE	12:36	10:56	11:14	0:00
2	DODGE	DARYN	42	DAVIS	13:05	10:56	11:29	0:44
3	CHOI	ROBERT	41	ROHNERT PARK	12:52	11:05	11:38	0:49
4	OWEN	KENNY	30	CASTRO VALLEY	12:52	10:56	11:55	0:57
5	ELLIS	BILL	43	RIO NIDO	13:39	10:56	11:35	1:24
6	POLLOCK	GRAHAM	34	CUPERTINO	13:46	10:59	11:55	1:54
7	WILSON	BARNEY	41	COOL	13:39	11:53	11:42	2:28
8	FORSMAN	BARLEY	30	COTATI	13:59	11:47	11:38	2:38
9	MC KENZIE	PAUL	47	RICHMOND	13:52	11:47	11:55	2:48
10	BERGE	CATHARINA	35	VISALIA	14:12	11:48	11:35	2:49
11	STARK	PETER	44	NO HOLLYWOOD	13:54	12:00	13:04	4:12
12	STERN	LAURA	40	MENLO PARK	14:40	12:19	12:16	4:29
13	ROBERTSON	CRAIG	44	LOS ALTOS	14:21	12:33	12:36	4:44
14	HOLLOWAY	KEN	49	SAN JOSE	15:24	12:20	12:11	5:09
15	SIMON	DOUG	43	SANTA ROSA	15:00	12:16	12:56	5:26
16	STAROBA	JOHN	23	SANTA ROSA	15:08	12:30	12:36	5:28
17	KNORR	CHRIS	41	YUBA CITY	14:59	12:42	13:04	5:59
18	SPEAKS	JOE	37	SAN FRANCISCO	14:53	12:18	13:54	6:19
19	KELLEHER	JIM	40	PALO ALTO	15:42	12:52	12:43	6:31
20	PHILLIPS	JENNIE	40	DANVILLE	15:23	13:22	13:11	7:10
21	SMITH	REBECCA	53	PORTLAND	15:53	13:07	13:22	7:36
22	MC CAW	RICHARD	50	SAN JOSE	15:23	13:22	13:48	7:47
23	HOLT	DAVID	50	LAGUNA NIGUEL	16:07	13:05	13:27	7:53
24	PACK	STEVE	49	RESEDA	16:58	13:00	13:37	8:49
25	BURNETT	PETER	39	CHICAGO PARK	17:01	13:28	13:11	8:54
26	AURAN	ED	36	SAN JOSE	16:28	13:43	13:56	9:21
27	BAHLO	TOM	46	LOS ALTOS	16:25	13:10	14:35	9:24
28	GUTTENBERG	PAUL	43	DAVIS	16:48	14:21	13:25	9:48
29	FELD	ROLLIN	45	BOLINAS	16:48	13:25	14:24	9:51
30	TAVOIAN	BRIAN	38	CEDAR CITY	15:04	14:18	15:23	9:59
31	KELLISON	KATHY	45	SANTA ROSA	16:36	14:12	13:58	10:00
32	GREENE	FORD	49	SAN ANSELMO	17:21	14:28	13:43	10:46
33	DICKINSON	RICHARD	49	SANTA MONICA	17:05	14:37	14:44	11:40
34	MORAN	SUSAN	31	COTATI	17:50	14:49	13:47	11:40
35	ZAHARIS	TOM L.	39	HALF MOON BAY	17:17	15:40	15:11	13:22
36	CRAIN	DAN	56	IRVINE	19:01	13:59	15:17	13:31
37	COOK	KEITH	45	LOOMIS	19:01	14:25	14:52	13:32
38	DUNLAP	WAYNE	40	SAN JOSE	20:04	14:28	14:22	14:08
39	COHN	MERRICK		CAMARILLO	20:15	14:44	13:56	14:09
40	SOGHOMONIAN	SARKIS	34	CONCORD	19:16	17:51	15:56	18:17
41	CALDWELL	CHRIS	32	SAN RAFAEL	21:00	16:07	16:13	18:34

California Triple Crown Stage Race Plaques were presented to the top 3 Men (Rupert Brauch, Daryn Dodge, and Robert Choi) and the top 3 Women (Catherina Berge, Laura Stern, and Jennie Phillips) at the Awards Breakfast held on 9/22/02. Kenny Owens was also awarded an Honorable Mention Plaque. Unfortunately, we didn't have any Tandem finishers this year, but the top 3 Tandems teams will also receive a plaque in future years. You can check these plaques at www.CalTripleCrown.com.

You don't have to do anything special to sign up for the Stage Race: In 2003, all you have to do is to sign up and ride your heart out on the **Devil Mountain Double, Heartbreak, and the Terrible Two**. Of course, that's much easier said than done!! Also, if you ride any Stage on a tandem, you must ride all three Stages on a tandem with the same partner.

The California Triple Crown lays down this challenge: be among the select few who are able to finish the Stage Race in 2003!!

CALIFORNIA TRIPLE CROWN CLUB COMPETITION

Congratulations to the following cycling clubs on the 2002 Leaderboard with the California Triple Crown:

- Davis Bike Club with 33 Finishers
- Santa Rosa Cycling Club with 18 Finishers
- Kern Wheelmen with 11 Finishers
- Marin Cyclists with 10 Finishers
- Almaden Cycle Touring Club with 8 Finishers
- Orange County Wheelmen with 8 Finishers
- Western Wheelers with 7 Finishers
- **Phoenix Bullshifters with 6 Finishers who came over from Arizona!!**
- Veloce Santiago with 6 Finishers

CALIFORNIA TRIPLE CROWN HALL OF FAME

"The dictionary is the only place success comes before work.
Hard work is the price we must all pay for success."
Vince Lombardi

The California Triple Crown Hall of Fame was started in June of 1999 to recognize those who have accomplished a significant milestone by riding over 10,000 Miles in the Double Century Series!! These select few cyclists have completed over 50 Double Centuries!! New Hall of Fame web pages will contain resumes for each of the people inducted in the Hall of Fame.

These select few who are in the Hall of Fame have demonstrated a huge commitment to long distance cycling. They have shown a **commitment to excellence that very few cyclists have demonstrated anywhere in the world**. Future inductees into the Hall of Fame may also include Ride Organizers and Support Volunteers who have demonstrated a huge commitment to the California Triple Crown Double Century Series, as well.

The following riders were inducted into the Hall of Fame at the Awards Breakfast held 9/22/02 after the Knoxville Fall Classic Double. Mark your calendars for the 2003 Awards Breakfast to be held **9/21/03!!**

Charlie Irwin has completed 50 Double Centuries. His first Double consisted of the first 200 Miles of his Grand Tour TRIPLE Century in 1976!! Amazingly enough, he continues to crank out Doubles some *26 years later!!* Charlie is my right hand man in the California Triple Crown products ... not only does he make the Custom Products but he also ships everything. It is a huge job and I appreciate his efforts. His advice to new riders: *"Keep riding ... it does get easier."*

Chuck Bramwell has completed 53 Double Centuries and continues to thrive on their challenge and beauty. His Blue Spectrum Titanium and Trek OCLV bikes are much better than the engine. He's often spotted singing Moody Blues or U2 songs on the Doubles. His advice to new riders: *"Set your sights high: You'll be surprised at what you can do in this sport!! Ask tons of questions. The California Triple Crown family are full of knowledge which they love to share."*

Doug Patterson has completed 53 Doubles since his first one at Death Valley in 1996 with the 20-35 MPH headwinds!! The aspect of long distance riding that he enjoys the most is getting away from work -- he loses his life when he rides and it's like he's free. His tips for new riders: *"Being prepared mentally is the real challenge. Know that you are going to have problems so accept them and learn from them. Quitting is not an option unless physical harm can happen."*

Craig Robertson has completed 53 Doubles since his first Davis Double in 1995. He started riding his bike 8 miles to work in 1991 ... "After that it was a steady downward spiral into Bikeaholism." His tips for new riders: *"Keep your equipment reliable. If you can talk on a climb, you aren't riding hard enough. Get the "rest stop" idea out of your head ... think of them as places to fill your bottles and pockets and get out of as fast as possible."*

Lynn Katano has completed 52 Doubles since her first Grand Tour 1995. The bikes she most enjoys riding are "John's tandem, Ron's tandem, Dan's tandem, etc." Many of us have had the joy of meeting Lynn by working hard to just stay near one of the tandems that she's motoring up the road!! What she treasures most about the Double Centuries is having the opportunity to meet a lot of wonderful friends. Lynn always has a *positive attitude and reminds us all: "I think I can ... I think I can ... I think I can"*.

When the Terrible Two didn't happen in 1991, **Bill Oetinger** volunteered to take it on the next year. Bill has brought the Terrible Two from near extinction and has lead the Santa Rosa Cycling Club in making it the great event it is today. Bill has completed 15 Double Centuries as well. His tips for new riders: *"Rejoice in being alive and healthy and able to do this wonderful thing called cycling. Always take time to look around you and see the world through which you're riding. Don't be afraid to have a sense of wonder about this wonderful world we live and ride in."*

CALIFORNIA TRIPLE CROWN WEB SITE

The web site is the best way to keep in touch with all the latest that's happening. Just go to www.CalTripleCrown.com and then check out the "What's New on this Web Site?" page. Over the next year, I'll be making a ton of improvements and additions to this so stay tuned.

If you don't have access to the Internet yet, check it out at a friend or family member's house, or Internet Coffee Shop near you!! Warning: you'll need at least an hour because there's so much to look at!!

CALIFORNIA TRIPLE CROWN 2003

Here are the dates for the 2003 Doubles: Butterfield Double on 2/15/03, Death Valley Spring Double on 3/1/03, Solvang Double on 3/29/03, Hemet D.C. on 4/12/03, Mulholland Double on 4/12/03, Devil Mountain Double on 4/26/03, Ridge Route Double on 5/3/03, Central Coast Double on 5/10/03, Davis Double on 5/17/03, Heartbreak Double on 5/24/03, Eastern Sierra Double on 6/14/03, Grand Tour on 6/21/03, Terrible Two on 6/28/03, Knoxville Fall Classic Double on 9/20/03, Tour of Two Forests Double on 9/27/03, and the Death Valley Fall Double on 10/18/03. A lot more information on these rides is available at www.CalTripleCrown.com.

I apologize for the lateness of this letter. One big reason for the delay was that I was still receiving Registration Forms for 2002 as recently as last week!! Many of these changed the results.

For 2003, I plan to have the Winner's letter and patches out in December. You do need to fill out a Registration Form ... it's the only way I can be sure you get the credit you deserve for the Doubles you complete. **Mail your Registration Form as soon as you have finished your last Double of the year.**

CALIFORNIA TRIPLE CROWN PRODUCTS

"I love my California Triple Crown Windbreaker!!"
Dawn Derlighter

Again this year, we have a number of great new California Triple Crown products available. I've been working with Voler, DeFeet, and Charlie Irwin on these new California Triple Crown Products ... and then building the new web pages. Photos, detailed descriptions, and Frequently Asked Questions about these products which can be found on the web site.

I decided to work through the many product issues and get those web pages completed before finishing this letter. Then the Orders started to come in fast and furiously ... we have processed and completely shipped over 140 Orders for Products since October, 2002!!

When you see the new California Triple Crown products, I hope you'll agree with me that they are really great!! Current inventory for these products can be found at www.CalTripleCrown.com so check there to see if we have your item in your size in stock. Here are some of the highlights:

- The **Voler Blue and Yellow Short Sleeve Jerseys** will continue to be sold and look outstanding.
- The **Voler Blue Long Sleeve Jersey** will continue to be sold. These Jerseys are excellent -- besides looking good, they keep you warm in the cold mornings but not too hot in the afternoons!!
- The **Voler Blue Windbreaker** is extremely high quality ... made of Vortex RipStop MicroFiber which is a high performance and lightweight material. This will be a super Windbreaker for those cold Winter Mornings!! However, it is quite lightweight.
- The **Custom PACE Jersey** is beautiful with Ribbons on the Back Pockets and CTC Logo on the Sleeves!! For Hall of Fame and Gold Thousand Mile Club Members, we have a Yellow Custom PACE Jersey available this year. In addition, these riders can specify Circular Custom Text around the outside of the California Triple Crown Logo with "Hall of Fame" and/or "Gold Thousand Mile Club"!!
- A **Custom T-Shirt** is being built with the same excellent process as the Custom PACE Jersey this year ... allowing the front pocket area to be customized with the rides you did as well as custom text.
- The **Custom Sport Shirt** is an outstanding, beautiful, comfortable white shirt which is simply dressed up by your California Triple Crown accomplishments on the Front Pocket!! This all white shirt has 3 Buttons and nice Collar and is much dressier than the T-Shirt. Great for work, parties, or anywhere!! This Polyester/Cotton fabric is really nice: It breathes, wicks sweat away from the skin, insulates the body but also feels soft and cozy. A small California Triple Crown logo on the front pocket is surrounded by the names of the ride you completed. Your Name and "Thousand Mile Club" can be added as circular text surrounding the Rides you completed and the California Triple Crown Logo.
- The **Custom Sweatshirt** is super comfortable. It's an extremely high quality long sleeve white Sweatshirt dressed up by your California Triple Crown accomplishments on the Front!! This fabric is really soft and makes for a very comfortable sweatshirt. Great to stay warm during those winter months or on the colder mornings before a good ride!! Large California Triple Crown logo on the front is surrounded by the names of the ride you completed.
- The **Custom Cap** is a white Baseball Style Cap with an adjustable slide closure on the back dressed up with your California Triple Crown accomplishments on the Front!! Your Name and "Thousand Mile Club" can be added as Circular Text surrounding the Rides you completed and the California Triple Crown Logo.
- The **Refrigerator Magnet** has the full color California Triple Crown logo on it with "2002 Finisher" followed by the 2003 Ride Schedule!! This California Triple Crown Refrigerator Magnet will look SUPER on your refrigerator!! This places the Ride Schedule in an easy to see place for your whole family to become familiar with so they can support you and the rides. Each California Triple Crown Finisher will receive one of these or a Patch at no charge. A major benefit to this on your refrigerator: It will be a constant reminder to you not to eat so much ... so you can climb those hills easier!! :)
- **Voler Arm Warmers** match perfectly with the Voler Jerseys. They also look super with the PACE Jersey.
- **DeFeet Socks** look great and work extremely well. The Bear socks look pretty cool with the Voler Products.
- **Specialized Water Bottles** look excellent with the full color California Triple Crown logo on the front and back.
- **Custom Plaque** is looking better than ever this year!!
- **Custom Ceramic Mug** is really awesome this year!!
- **Plastic Coffee Mug and Mouse Pad** continue to be outstanding products!!

A **BIG THANKS** to Charlie Irwin and his company for building all of the Custom Products this year as well as doing the shipping and handling on the orders. These products have become really popular ... so it's turned out to be a big job!!

There are tons of details on each of the products on the web site so check it all out. The order form is on the web site and ready to go. If you've already placed an order, you can always place another one!! If you don't have access to

the Internet yet, check it out at the house of a friend or family member or at an Internet Coffee Shop near you!! If you can't get to the Internet, send a Business Size Self Addressed Stamped Envelope with 55 cents postage to me: Chuck Bramwell, 4911 Tamarack Way, Irvine, California 92612 ... and ask me to send you the Order Form.

CALIFORNIA TRIPLE CROWN VOLUNTEERS

"The opportunity for giving is what gives us meaning in our life."
A Very Wise Person

Many folks ask us, "How can we help make the California Triple Crown continue?" One way that you can help is to order and wear some of the products. So if you're a finisher for the second, third, or seventh time, place an order for a Jersey this year. Then wear your Jersey or T-Shirt with pride, and tell everyone that will listen what the California Triple Crown is all about!! Now that you're a Triple Crown Finisher, other riders who never dreamed of doing a Double, let alone three of them in one year, will be looking up to you for advice and leadership.

Why are Double Centuries so successful in California? Why are Doubles continuing in popularity here but becoming less popular in other places? There are many reasons I'm sure. One reason is that I see so many excited volunteers at these rides helping in a big way to make these challenges possible. Please think seriously about giving back to our sport: Volunteer for at least one Double next year!! You can make a difference!! Get creative with food, music, atmosphere, have fun and make a memory for a lot of other cyclists!!

Most impressive are the 31 cyclists who became members of the 2002 Gold Thousand Mile Club by supporting at least one Double in the series!! Also on the Web Site is the 2002 Support Volunteer Report which tracks the Doubles you or your family members volunteer to support. This information is based on your input on the Registration Forms. These rides can only continue if volunteers (spelled Y-O-U) jump in and help. It's not enough to just ride the rides because if that's all everyone does, these major adventures will go the way of the dinosaurs!! It's not easy running Rest Stops 200+ Miles from nowhere so each of these rides needs YOUR help.

Which of these Doubles need your help? All of them!! You and your family can have fun and make a difference: call the ride organizers and tell them you want to help. Put on your thinking cap and make that Rest Stop a great memory for all who drop by!!

I'd like to recognize the Triple Crown Ride Organizers: **Jim Watrous** for the Hemet D.C. **George Pinney** and the Quackcyclists for the Devil Mountain Double. **Brian Stark** for the Central Coast Double. **Dan Shadoan and the Davis Bike Club** for the Davis Double. **Bill Oetinger and the Santa Rosa Cycling Club** for the Terrible Two. **Kermit Ganier, Lisa Shelley and the L.A. Wheelmen Bike Club** for the Grand Tour. **Rory MacLeod and the Quackcyclists** for the Knoxville Fall Classic Double. **Chris Kostman and Deb Caplan** for the Death Valley Doubles, Solvang Double, Butterfield Double, Classic TOTF, Heartbreak and Eastern Sierra Double. These folks give tons of time and energy to keep these Doubles continuing. **It's easy to tell these people what you don't like about their events. It's just as easy to praise them for all of the good things they do!! Thank you to all of the Ride Organizers for a great 2002 season!!**

REALLY BIG FUTURE GOALS AND ADVENTURES

"Have great hopes ... and dare to go all out for them.
Have great dreams ... and dare to live them.
Have tremendous expectations ... and believe in them."
Anonymous

There's lots of room for improvement in the California Triple Crown series of Doubles. For example, training with a coach can bring a huge improvement in speed and climbing power. There are plenty of ways to improve on comfort making these rides more fun. Of course, none of these Doubles are ever easy but that's the challenge of them -- each one provides a Personal Growth Experience. When you're ready, consider stepping up to the harder rides in the Triple Crown for even more challenge and a deeper sense of accomplishment. Since these harder rides are **among the most difficult Doubles anywhere on the planet surface**, you'll always have room for improvement right in the California Triple Crown Series of Double Centuries!!

**We rolled across the *high* plains ... *Deep* into the mountains
Felt so good to me ... Finally feelin' free"
"Roll Me Away" by Bob Seger**

How about riding from coast to coast - all the way across America -- using only a 3 week Vacation? I've ridden three full Pacific - Atlantic - Cycling (PAC) Tours with long distance **cycling legends, Lon Haldeman and Susan Notorangelo. I can not say enough good things about these Cycling Expeditions Across America.** I was fortunate to be able to ride a PAC Tour in 2000 ... it is so fun to get out on some wide open roads!! My CalTripleCrown teammates, Ken Bartholic, Cheryl McMurray, and I wrote a detailed account of our trip which you can find at www.CalTripleCrown.com. I highly recommend these trips: I still wake up in the middle of the night dreaming of riding endless Roller Coasters!! Checkout www.PACTour.com for all the information. Completing future Triple Crowns can provide those "Personal Growth Experiences" to get you ready to roll!! **It's amazing what you can accomplish** - and Lon and Susan are the true wizards at helping you turn your dream into a reality!!

"The doubles I rode since I discovered them in '94 were all memorable,
and in some way, preparation for something I never imagined I could do - the Race Across America (RAAM)."
Sam Beal

How about the ultimate challenge: the Furnace Creek 508 followed by the Race Across America? Impossible? No way--just ask the many Triple Crown Winners who have now gone on to compete very successfully in the ultimate long distance race. My hat's off to all of the Triple Crown finisher's who went on and completed any part of RAAM this year. Check out the 508 and RAAM on the web on my Favorite Sites page at www.CalTripleCrown.com. I was on a 508 Team in October, 1999 and had a really good experience. Completing future Triple Crowns can serve as the launch pad for your really long rides!!

How about completing Paris - Brest - Paris in 2003? I rode PBP in 1999 and am reeling over how great it was!! Here's a piece of my ride report ... "I was so pumped when I got the finish that I nearly passed out!! Certainly, this was heaven. ... So many memories. PBP changed me, big time. Deep down inside I now have a deeper passion for cycling. I didn't think that was possible. But it's very true." Completing future Triple Crowns can serve as the cornerstone of your training program!!

CALIFORNIA TRIPLE CROWN COMEBACKS

At the end of the ABC Coverage of the 1989 Tour de France, Greg Le Mond lifts his 5 year old son up to the Winner's Block as the announcer says:

"Comebacks are always a part of the fascination with sports
From so far down, to so high up
How does it happen?"

Like so many things, it begins with the most simple belief
The one you must have in yourself
That must be translated into results by dedication
The knowledge that dedication which feeds on belief can make it so."

When you're looking for incredible comeback stories, you don't have to look further than some amazing people who completed the 2002 California Triple Crown series!! I asked Frank Neal to tackle the big project of talking to so many California Triple Crown Winners who have made a major comeback in 2002. Thanks to Frank for the following:

Each time Ultradistance Riders start an Event, they face obvious physical challenges; conditioning, nutrition, hydration, hours on a bike seat, tired legs, strained backs, "hot feet", and so many more. Beyond the physical challenges of a Double, Riders face many other factors that are out of their control. Just to name a few: wind, rain, careless drivers, and mechanical breakdown. All-important mental toughness is also required to maintain determination and concentration for 200 miles. Some of our Riders have faced challenges beyond these. They have faced further adversity and have come back to finish their California Triple Crown. Here are some of their stories.

Update: Comebacks 2001. In 2001, we had eight Comeback stories. Each of these individuals came back from challenges in 2000/2001 to complete their Triple Crown in 2001. Here is an update of their progress in 2002 (in parenthesis is their challenge from 2000/2001).

Ken Bartholic: 4 Doubles (bike/car collision, broken collarbone).

John Beam: 3 Doubles (not bike related, jaw relocation).

Charles Griffice: 9 Doubles (bike/deer collision, strained back).

Frank Neal: 3 Doubles (bike/car collision, broken vertebra and punctured lung).

Bill Palmer: 6 Doubles (bike/car collision, major knee surgery and Hepatitis C).

Doug Patterson: 6 Doubles (bike crash, shattered shoulder joint).

Tom Romano: 1 Double (bike related, replaced ACL knee ligament). His knee is fine this year, he replaced Double Centuries with Road Racing for 2002.

David Nakai: 1 Double (car accident, broken neck). David has a further story for 2002. After his inspirational Comeback Triple Crown in 2001, he started 2002 with a vengeance! Unfortunately, he suffered a ruptured disk in his back early in 2002. While he is back to riding ultra distances, he has changed his riding style. He says it has made him realize how hard gear-mashing is on his back. Learning how to “spin” is hard for this gear-cruncher. But, he remains philosophical, “I guess I’ll learn how to spin and, maybe and finally, become a real cyclist”. His advice to any cyclist, “Have fun and ride safe!” If you know David, you know his advice is sincere. Welcome back, David! Have Fun in 2003!

“I believe we have more potential inside of us than we can imagine.

When a crisis like this happens, we find out what we're made of.

We find that we're made of an awfully lot.”

Christopher Reeves on 20/20, 3 Years after his paralyzing accident

Comebacks 2002. In 2001/2002, the following Riders overcame extreme physical challenges to complete their California Triple Crown 2002. Congratulations to each one!

John T. Clare. At mile 175 of a rainy Solvang Double 2002, John was bombing down a hill when he hit a patch of mud. He ended up in a ditch with a broken left collarbone and several broken ribs. He went on to finish Solvang! Immediately after finishing, he headed for a hospital. Eight weeks later, he was back with the CTC and completed the Davis Double. After Davis, he went on to complete five more 2002 Doubles which included Eastern Sierra, Grand Tour, Knoxville, Heartbreak, and Death Valley Fall. He completed an unbelievable nine Doubles in 2002. John has a new insight about the risks of downhill speed: “Going downhill as fast as you can will only save you a few seconds and is not worth the risk. The best time can be made up on the climbs. It’s better to suffer on the uphill, than to suffer a broken collarbone on the downhill!” John has completed 47 Doubles in only four years: ’99 – 8, ’00 – 15, ’01 – 15, ’02 – 9. Oh yeah, did we forget to tell you that John is “60-something”?! John, you’re amazing!

Mary Conte. In December 2001, Mary slipped on a stairway and tore her ACL ligament, as well as several tears in the meniscus of the knee. In January 2002, major surgery was required to replace the ACL ligament and repair the torn meniscus. She had to search to find a Doctor who would give her the “okay” to ride again. And “ride again” she did! In March, she finished the Solvang Double. In addition, she finished Hemet, Davis, and Grand Tour to gain her Triple Crown for 2002. Great Comeback, Mary!

Ivey Henderson. A PBP Finisher in 1999 and a five-time Triple Crown Winner, Ivey was absent from the 2001 CTC. He began to feel that something had changed with his body seven years ago when he was 45. He attributed it to aging. When he turned 49, he realized he needed to see a doctor and he was diagnosed with prostate cancer. He completed his Triple Crown in 2000; but he was beginning to lose weight and strength. Ivey chose a natural course of treatment, leaving chemo and surgery as last resorts. He takes a studied mixture of herbs and supplements. He also adopted a pretty-much vegetarian diet with only salmon for animal protein. While Ivey continued to ride, he didn’t feel motivated in 2001 to train for Doubles. During 2001 his PSA began to drop (a medical measurement of the progress of the cancer, dropping is good!). He began to gain strength during 2001 and he is now back! Ivey completed his Triple Crown 2002 and he is hoping to qualify for PBP 2003. His Words of Wisdom, “To men over 45: All body changes are NOT due to aging. Get an annual check of your prostate and PSA!” Welcome back, Ivey!

John Robbins. John is a CTC Hall of Famer with over 70 Doubles, BMB Finisher, PBP Finisher, and Randonneur 5000. At the end of the 2001 CTC Series, John experienced chest problems. It turned out that he needed a triple heart bypass! After successful surgery, in November 2001, John was back on the trainer in four weeks. He was back on the road in eight weeks. He rejoined CTC at the Hemet Double in April 2002. During 2002, John finished six Doubles! He is modest about his Comeback; “It’s just a medical story. I followed Doctor’s orders with my own spin on the exercise component.” Married last June, his inspiration is his wife, Karen, who recently completed her 9th Hawaiian Iron Man Triathlon and has completed over 26 Doubles herself!! John would prefer to tell his story one-on-one. He’ll be riding the CTC Trail again in 2003. So, when you see him, be sure to ask him about his story. John, you’re awesome! It’s great to see you back!

Mark Martinez. Three days before Grand Tour 2001, Mark was out for an “easy spin”. He took the bait from a Racer who was out to put the “hurt” on someone. After a 30mph ride, that caused him too much time in his heart monitor “Red Zone”, he could not get his heart rate and blood pressure back down. Already suffering from diabetes and high blood pressure, his heart was unstoppable. That night, he began to sense a buildup of fluid in his lungs. By 2am, he was coughing up fluid. Mark went straight to the hospital and found that he was suffering from pulmonary edema. Fearing a sudden heart attack, doctors kept him in Intensive Care for four days. With medication and some Zen Meditation, his body responded. Mark was released after he promised to continue on the medication that also caused nausea, weakness, and muscle pain. He added his own program of Meditation, Yoga, and Tai Chi. After a week, Mark was back

on the bike. By Death Valley Fall, he was back to Doubles and he also completed Route 66 in 2001. Mark added five more CTC Doubles and another Triple Crown in 2002. He now continues his training much more carefully and notes, "I am now a much smarter, stronger, and better Rider!" Great to have you back on the road, Mark!

"Double" Comebacks 2002. The following were Comebacks in 2001. Then, misfortune struck again! They have returned with another Comeback story for 2002. They are "Double" Comebacks!

Frank Neal. After a severe bike/car accident in November 2000, Frank came back in 2001 to capture his Triple Crown. Then, in December 2001, he sustained a dislocated hip in another bike crash. This comeback was more difficult than the first one. Frank states, "My messed up hip was much worse on my cycling than the broken vertebra and collapsed lung from last year." Unable to return to cycling until April, he came back to complete three 2002 Doubles: Eastern Sierra, Grand Tour and Knoxville to finish another Triple Crown. Frank's view on the subject, "Every Ride is a new adventure and I love to Ride!" Welcome back, Frank "Garfield" Neal!

Bill Palmer. After a head-on bike/car accident in 1994, major knee surgeries, and a bout with Hepatitis "C" in 1999, Bill came back to finished his Triple Crown in 2001. Early in 2002, he was diagnosed with tuberculosis. Bill feels "lucky" because the TB was only diagnosed due to a hospital visit to treat a severe arm infection following Solvang Double 2002. Both were cured and he got back on the road with a passion! In 2002, Bill completed an amazing six Doubles: Solvang, Central Coast, Tour of Two Forests, Eastern Sierra, Heartbreak, and Death Valley Fall. Kudo's to Bill! It's great to have him back on the California Triple Crown circuit!!

Comeback Plus!

Tom Miller. For this 1996/1997 Triple Crown Winner, 1998 was not so kind. Tom was involved in a near-fatal bike/car accident that caused major trauma to one leg and required emergency surgery to save it. Tom came back to finish his Triple Crown every year since 1999. In 2002, Tom continued his Comeback with a special honor. In September 2002, Tom competed in the UMCA 24-Hr. Time Trial Championships in Iowa. He won his Division (Male 50-59) and completed 400 miles, which also qualifies him for RAAM! Congratulations, Tom!

Honorable Mention. Some of our Rider Friends have had challenges that prevented them from completing their Triple Crown in 2002. We wish "Tailwinds" to the following.

Perry Smith. A two-time Triple Crown Winner and a two-time Furnace Creek 508 Finisher, Perry contracted meningitis, strep pneumonia, and bacterial endocarditis in November 2001. Five days later a piece of his heart valve broke loose and traveled up to the right lobe of his brain. It caused a massive stroke and partial paralysis on his left side. In December, Perry had open-heart surgery and later a pacemaker was required. He was hospitalized until February 2002. After struggling just to be able to sit up, Perry is now walking with a cane. He misses the sport he loves: Cycling. While challenged, he continues to improve. As long as Perry is as determined as he is, there are no limits to his recovery. Perry, we hope to see you back on the road again!

Greg Somerville. Greg was a Racer until 1999. Between 1996 and 1999, he had four car/bike accidents that included a head injury that took him out of competition. Greg changed to Double Centuries in 2000, when he finished 5 Doubles and placed 4th in the California Triple Crown Stage Race!! In 2001, the continuing head pain took him off the bike entirely. Greg is now back to riding. Welcome back to the sport, Greg. We hope to see you back on the CTC trail in the future!

Mike "Mouse Man" Rose. From 1996 to 2001, Mike finished 37 CTC Doubles. In 2001, he cranked out a most impressive 12 Double Centuries!! After Fall DVD 2001, Mike was diagnosed with lung cancer. Because he had numerous small lesions, surgery or radiation therapy would have to wait and he began chemotherapy. During 2002, the side effects from the chemo caused him to lose his motivation to ride. Mike wants all of his CTC Friends to know, "2002 was a big miss for me. I miss seeing all of you." The treatment is working and the lesions are shrinking and the chemo continues in 2003. Mike is hoping that the chemo will end by this June and he will then be able to undergo radiation therapy to treat the largest lesion. Mike plans to be back on the bike in 2003. He wants everyone to know that he is feeling okay, he is still working, and the prognosis is positive. After he returns to cycling, his goal is to complete his CTC Hall of Fame. He added, "Let them know, I will not let this stop me!" We hope to see you back, soon, Mike!

Support Honorable Mention. The CTC requires a lot of non-rider support. Among these are SAG Drivers, Rest Stop workers, Bike Club members, Sponsors, Organizers, Promoters, and many more. They include Bike Club volunteers, spouses, friends, past-riders, and community volunteers. Some of our longtime Supporters are also facing challenges.

Bill Oetinger. A Triple Crown Winner in 1994, 1997, and 1998; Bill was inducted into the CTC Hall of Fame in 2002 for his dedication to CTC, Terrible Two, and cycling in general. In 1991, the Terrible Two Double was discontinued. In 1992,

Bill became Head Ride Organizer for T.T. Bill and his crew resurrected the Terrible Two and made it the premier event that it is today. Bill still remains the Head Ride Organizer of T.T. with 12 years of service. In June 2001, a routine blood test showed lower than normal counts on white blood cells and platelets. By April 2002, the verdict was confirmed. Bill has Chronic Lymphocytic Leukemia. He wants everyone to know that this is an indolent (lazy), non-progressive cancer. It may lay dormant for 10-20 years. It is causing Bill no pain or problems and his Oncologist recommends no treatment at this point. It is at Stage 0 and if it should progress, there are treatments available to retard its progress. Bill says, "It has not changed my planning for the future. It has caused me to appreciate Life as I find it." He wants everyone to know that he feels great, is riding strong, and enjoying Life. Bill is riding as much as ever, just not riding the really, really long rides anymore. All of the Best, Bill!

Comeback Stories. Dedication is a major factor in the success of every Double Century Rider. Adversity, also, is a very real aspect of our Sport. It is by our dedication, that we overcome the adversity. Many times, it helps us to know that others have overcome the adversity and prevailed. We thank the Rider's, above, who shared their stories with us! During 2003, there will be new Comeback stories. At the end of our 2003 Season, if you have a Comeback Story, or you know someone that has, please send us an email. Tailwinds to all!

CONCLUDING REMARKS

I'd like to also recognize those California Triple Crown Winners who are over 60 years of age. If you want to meet some present day heroes, ride with some of these cyclists and you'll quickly be in awe at their positive mental attitude and their outstanding physical conditioning. In fact, you've probably ridden with these folks and not even known it because they are so young both physically and mentally. I can only hope to be in such good shape down the road!! Special congrats to these youngsters. As Neil Young says, "Long may you run."

It was a great personal achievement to complete these Doubles this year. My hat is off to you for your accomplishments!!

Riding 3 Double Centuries in a year is **ONE BIG TIME, MAJOR ACCOMPLISHMENT!!** You have taken the most simple belief that you have in yourself and have translated it into results by dedication. In 2002, YOU were a California Triple Crown Finisher!! Congratulations!!

The Triple Crown ride organizers and I congratulate you. We hope to see you going for the gold again in 2003!!

"To learn, as we grow old, the secrets of our soul"
"Question" by the Moody Blues

In the Tour of Two Forests Double, Heartbreak Hill is at Mile 138. There are Mile 138's in everyone's life ... where the climbing gets real steep. Some come earlier in the race. Some later. **But wherever you find them, you can overcome them.** Completing a Double Century is not about winning the race against 100 or 1500 other cyclists. It's about winning the race against yourself.

To improve. Against your best self. There is a Hindu proverb that says, "True superiority is not how a man measures up to another but **how he measures up to his prior self.**"

To do the very best with what you've been given.

From the Deserts, to the Mountains, to the Ocean, the California Triple Crown rides provide a lot of awesome cycling adventures, challenges, beautiful scenery, great memories, and fun for each of us!!

I'm already planning how I'm going to improve on my next Double!!

See ya on the road!!

Chuck

Chuck Bramwell

California Triple Crown Guy

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"There is nothing a good day of cycling won't cure."

"Let's Roll!"

Todd Beamer, United Flight 93, September 11, 2001