

WEDNESDAY, SEPTEMBER 28, 2005

Tucson Bicycle Classic: Roar of crowd not his motivation

Nick Schreiber combats deaf-ness by being 'tuned in,' his dad says. He wants to go pro.

BRYAN LEE
Tucson Citizen



Photos by MASON IBAS

Nick Schreiber crosses the finish line at a Tucson Criterium race. This weekend's Tucson Bicycle Classic, a planned rite of passage, could bring him national attention.

Jay Schreiber was giving it his best it's-like-this-son try. "Racing a bicycle," he told Nick, then 13, "means you go to that very edge of pain. When you reach that pain, you slow down."

"But Dad," said Nick, "I like the pain."

At that moment, Jay Schreiber "knew where his son was headed."

After some bumps in the road - the least being deafness from birth - Nick Schreiber has his directions straight at age 25 heading into this weekend's three-stage Tucson Bicycle Classic. It's an event he has trained for and planned for, set his dreams on.

"It's my chance," he says. "I'm focused. I'm been working for it for six months."

Doing well in his Category 2 division means possible national recognition. He is determined to be a pro and he believes time is getting tight.

He has returned to racing with powerful motivation after a two-year racing hiatus for school and family and careful thinking. He had a house built and has a new job. He has two stepchildren, two toddlers with wife, Cecilia, and a third due to arrive the same day (Nov. 19) as El Tour de Tucson.

Coming back was a no-brainer. Racing is too much in his blood not to give it his best shot.

In the meantime, Denny Vaughan, who brought Schreiber into his Flag Velo team fellowship last winter, would like to borrow the athletic, linebacker-style cyclist until he goes pro.. He has been training him for the TBC.

"We want to expand our team and work around him and win some races next year," Vaughan said. "He keeps getting better. He has a great attitude and is mentally tough."

Vaughan talks about Schreiber's ability to ride away from adversity. This summer, at the Summit Center Stage Race near Flagstaff, Schreiber discovered signs that say "Watch Out For Falling Rocks" is no joke.

"He was in the first five or six and he hit one in the shadows," said Jay Schreiber, a U.S. Cycling Federation official as well as his son's coach. "The bike shot straight up in the air and went forward. I thought it was going cream everyone around him."

advertisement

But Schreiber took his bruises the next week to the Tucson Criterium. And teaming with Vaughan, he beat Tucson pro Rob Alvarez and went on to win the three-part series.

"Fast ... he's really fast," Alvarez told Jay Schreiber.

Jay sent his son to successful local Masters racer Norm Kibble this year to learn the finer points of sprinting.

"I can't teach him anything about sprinting," Kibble told the father. He beat me in 11 of the 12 we did."

Schreiber's makeup comes from beating the odds - racing without hearing aids.

"It's quiet and real scary," he said.

His charge-forward type of M.O. has gotten him into some trouble, but with interesting results.

He crashed in a race in Oregon a few years ago and the event's guest, Lance Armstrong, helped pick him up and gave him some encouragement.

"Still the biggest thrill of all," Schreiber said about his cycling life.

He entered the El Tour de Tucson in 2002 at the last minute after having not ridden seriously for four months. He attacked the 109 miles until he got swallowed up in the last sprint and finished 22nd.

He is by necessity learning to refine his game, not think exclusively of the "hammer." Gone are the days when he could take a dare from his dad and try to climb the Mount Lemmon Highway at his old 190 pounds.

"It took him 43 minutes," Jay Schreiber says. "He was shattered but he said, 'OK, I'm going to train.' He's now 167 pounds (6-foot frame) and maybe 5 percent body fat. His youth idol was Miguel Indurain (Spaniard who won five straight Tours de France in the '90s). He looks like Indurain, using bigger gears and methodically getting faster and faster."

Schreiber has mainstreamed his whole life, combating his deafness by being "tuned in," as Vaughan puts it. His father credits his overdeveloped tactile sense and "selective hearing" ability. Having been a "star athlete" all his life has helped direct him as well as that nonexistent pain threshold.

Schreiber was a four-year starter at quarterback for the Arizona Schools for the Deaf and Blind and also a four-year basketball star. A happy badge of courage: a wicked circular scar below the right elbow.

"The rim," Schreiber smiles.



Schreiber has refined his game. It's no longer just "hammer" 'em.

SCHREIBER IN 2005

1st, Picacho Peak Time Trial Series, Category 1-2, 14 points

1st, Tucson Criterium Series, Category 1-2, 22 points

2nd, Arizona State Road Race Championships (78 miles), 2nd, Category 1-2, 3:16:25

2nd, Arizona Road Race Championships (78 miles), Category 1-2, 5:30:50

3rd, Mount Graham Hill Climb (Arizona State Hill Climb Championships), (20 miles), Category 2, 1:36:25

3rd, Mount Lemmon Time Trial (11.35 miles), Category 1-2, 47:44

6th, Kitt Peak Time Trial (11.6 miles), Category 1-2, 55:09

OTHER CAREER HIGHLIGHTS

1st, 1999 El Tour de Tucson 31-Mile, 1:22:51

2nd, 2002 World Deaf Games Time Trial, Rome

3rd, General Category, 2002 Tucson Bicycle Classic, Category 3, 5:40:39; 22nd, 2002 El Tour de Tucson 109-mile, 4:24:51

TUCSON BICYCLE CLASSIC

What: Multilevel Road Bicycle Stage Race

When: Friday through Sunday

Stage 1: Noon to 3 p.m. starts, Friday - 4 miles, Kinney Road east of McCain Loop turnoff, west past entrance of Desert Museum and back to Brown Mountain Picnic Area entrance (Note: Due to recent washout of part of Kinney Road, original McCain Loop course must accommodate detour traffic and cannot be used). n Stage 2: 6:30-8:30 a.m. starts, 21-mile loop through the desert and Gates Pass with a 12 percent climb six miles from the finish. Parts of Gates Pass closed to traffic. Start and finish at Greasewood and Anklam roads at Pima Community College West.

Stage 3: 6:30-10:30 a.m. starts, circuit race, around a 5.6-mile loop with rollers and descents that provide 300 feet of vertical climbing per lap. Start at Greasewood and Anklam roads.

Prizes: \$7,200 cash purse

Registration: Preregistration only: www.casaschurch.org/tbc