

'We're kind of gluttons for punishment'

Cyclists take on hill as temperatures top 100

By Andy Graham

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The Boltinghouse Road hill just north of Bethel Lane was rated among the nation's top 100 challenging climbs by Mike Magnuson in *Bicycling Magazine*. And temperatures Wednesday in Bloomington exceeded 100, according to the National Weather Service in Indianapolis.

Undaunted, a dozen hardy — and some might say masochistic — souls decided they'd see if they could match or better fellow Bloomington Bicycle Club member Kevin Hayes' established mark of climbing the Boltinghouse hill seven times in 42 minutes. Just for fun.

"This is not an official BBC event, but rather an informal thing that grew out of the *Bicycling Magazine* article, which listed both this hill and Horseman's Camp hill over in Brown County as among the top 100 best or most challenging climbs," said Jennifer Miers, of the BBC rules committee, on hand to document the proceedings,

Asked if the weather, with heat indexes nearing 110 degrees, made the group consider postponing the climb, Miers said, "We ride year round, pretty much, in about any weather. We're kind of gluttons for punishment."

A dozen climbers showed up to tame Boltinghouse hill, 300 feet of elevation with an average 20 percent gradient that is steepest near the top: Colin Allen, Jerry Arvesen, Keith Vogelsang, Duane Rogers, Steve Emery, Dave Tanner, Eric Lewis, Joe Dresselhaus, Bob "Turbo" Lowers, Bob DeGross, Jim Isenberg and Andrea Boudra.

Lewis finished his seventh climb in 27 minutes, besting Hayes' mark. "Hey, the first seven were easy," Lewis said, with a grin that belied the statement. He and Tanner both completed 13 climbs in under an hour, with Tanner just a couple of minutes behind Lewis. Also reaching double digits were Vogelsang, Emery and Lowers, with 10 climbs apiece in their allotted hour.

Boudra only intended to climb the hill once, which she did, but none of the other riders finished with fewer than six climbs during the hour allotted to the event, including 54-year-old DeGross.

DeGross finished his final ascent with a smile, which was not a facial expression common to his colleagues. Asked about it, he said, "Old men rule. Actually, that smile was either a reflection of satisfaction at completing the climb, or a lack of oxygen to my brain. But, hey, it was fun — in a sick, twisted sort of way."

Dave Tanner successfully makes 13 climbs up Boltinghouse hill in just under one hour. Bloomington area bicyclists decided to attack the infamous Boltinghouse Road hill northeast of the city Wednesday evening to see how many times each could climb the long, steep hill on the county road in one hour. Two cyclists each made the ascent 13 times in the hour without walking. Monty Howell | Herald-Times



Bloomington area bicyclists muscle up the infamous Boltinghouse hill northeast Bloomington Wednesday evening, just for the “fun” of it.
Monty Howell | Herald-Times

