



[Pisgah Mountain Bike Stage Race Review](#)

General Race Info.

- 4 days 130 Miles 31,000+ feet of elevation gain
- October 15th-18th, 2009
- Over half of the miles are technical Single Track!
- A six mile time trial followed by three Big Days in Pisgah National Forest.

Thursday, October 15, 2009: Tornado Time Trial

- 6 miles. 800' of climbing.
- This course is located at Brevard College.

The start of the race was pretty uneventful, but lots of fun. The single track section of the course was just cut a few days before the race and was very slick. On a side note I was a student at Brevard College starting in 1984, so it was kind of fun riding my mtb around the campus and seeing how things have changed.

Friday, October 16, 2009: White Squirrel Loop

- 37 miles. 9,000+ ft of elevation gain.
- Classic Pisgah single-track! Squirrel Gap is a continuous 1.5 ft wide single-track trail hinged to the mountainside for miles. This day packs over 22 miles of single-track.

Okay, this is when the race really started. The weather was cold and rainy. What would have been a crazy fun course was now just crazy. Most of the day was a blur of gravel roads, hills, slick single track and loads of fun. I knew a couple of keys to the race would be to take care of your bike and your body. You are racing each stage, but you must also realize that tomorrow you will need to be ready to do it all over again.

This was the day that Brad broke his nose. Brad and Justin had finished and left for the doctor before Brenda and I finished so I only saw a picture of his bloody bike. Brad's bike was covered with blood, but he did not make too much of the accident and just got ready for the next day. I on the other hand would have been crying like a baby.



Saturday, October 17, 2009: Land of the Waterfalls Loop

- 41 miles. 9,500+ ft of elevation gain.
- From the low cool streams to the high elevation timber forest, this loop has it all. Laurel Mountain trail is a local favorite. True single-track. You will get a chance to cool your feet down a bit on Bradley Creek Trail and test your skills with over 20 miles of single-track.

Six or seven thigh deep (waist to Brenda) creek crossings was the high/low light of the day. The creek crossings were early in the day so our feet were frozen for hours! During our ride/hike up to the high point of the course I noticed a few snow flakes and then within a few miles everything was white with snow. The downhill off of Pilot Rock was a mix of fun and fear, but we made it down in one piece and were happy to have a few mile of gravel before the next single track section.

After the race the normally stubborn Brenda was feeling weak and not very excited about the final day. Really it was more like "this sucks and I want to go home". I was pretty set on finishing this thing off and figured she would come around to the idea.

Saturday's stage did seem to hurt everyone and I talk to several people that were unsure about starting the next day. Some times you do have to ask yourself what is reasonable, and this race was starting to push the limited. In the end I figured we signed up for this race and we should finish it. So, after a massage and some good food Brenda started to feel better about the next day.

Sunday, October 18, 2009: The Transylvania Loop

- 47 miles. 12,000+ ft of elevation gain.
- Over 16 miles of single-track. Farlow Gap and Black Mountain trails offer a true taste of Pisgah's gnarly single-track. These trails are among the hardest trails open to mountain bikes in the Pisgah National Forest.

This stage was "all good", the sun was shining, the trails were dry, the single track was fun, and we were getting close to finishing this thing off!

Brenda and I both felt great and had a blast. I broke my chain about half way through the race, but was able to fix it and catch Brenda before the finish.

Brenda finished 4th in the pro women
Justin finished 5th in the 30-39
Brad finished 5th in the elite 40+
Lee finished 6th in the elite 40+

Over the next few years this race will become a classic. At times the unusually cold weather made this race course feel a little more like a survival test. Maybe next year we will see a dry course and get to the beer a few minutes faster.

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