

A Tribute to a Champion and Plead to "Share the Road"

Jeff Littmann, a long time Wisconsin advocate of cycling and triathlons passed away on Tuesday, October 5. He was fatally hit by a car while riding his bike last Friday. He suffered severe head injuries when a driver crashed into him and Lauren Jensen, pro Wisconsin triathlete. Jensen was able to walk away with a broken collar bone.

I met Jeff back in the 80's. He lived in the Fox Cities and managed the Vic Tanny Clubs in Wisconsin, as well as, the Vic Tanny Club in Appleton. Jeff who was very much a forward thinker, sponsored the first triathlons in the Fox Cities: "Paperweight Triathlon" and "Secura Triathlon." He then went on to sponsor a number of triathlons in the state which were called the "Vic Tanny Wisconsin Triathlon Series." This was quite avante garde as triathlons were not mainstream in the 80's as they are today.

Later in life, Jeff moved from the body building arena into cycling achieving numerous cycling awards and raced professionally for Team LAPT. But he is most known for his ease and love of coaching cyclists. Jeff was so real with no pretenses; well liked because although highly competitive he always shared his cycling expertise with everyone. He was also the President of the Wisconsin Cycling Association and owner of Attitude Sports Store in Pewaukee.

So how did this tragedy happen? According to the 25 year old driver, he was blinded by the early sun and did not see him. What is scary is Littmann is the eighth bicyclist killed by a motor vehicle in Wisconsin this year. In 2009 there were seven. In 2009 Minnesota had 13 cyclists die on the road due to crashes.

Jeff was a highly skilled and an expert when it came to riding. We do not know exactly how or what happened nor can we be play the judge, the jury, or executioner.

Cycling bloggers have gone wild with speculation and accusation of who was wrong or what went wrong. Jeff's closest friends are taking heed. They are cautioning the naysayers that we are all hurting over this tragic accident. But if we insist on pointing the finger, this will not mend the motorist and cyclist rift. We must instead work to educate riders and motorists alike that we can "share the road."

Only two facts remain: Jeff is gone and the number of people choosing to ride bikes is growing whether this is due to economic, environmental or health reasons.

Do many of us cyclists even know the State of Wisconsin general safety rules for bicyclists?

- **Ride at least three feet from the curb.**
- **Don't swerve in and out around parked vehicles.**
- **Always ride in the same direction as traffic. Obey all traffic laws.**
- Be predictable! Let other users know where you intend to go and maintain an understood course.
- Keep at least three feet between yourself and passing or parked traffic.

Motorist General Guidelines are:

- Bicycles are vehicles. They belong on the road.

- Cyclists need room to get around potholes, sewer grates and other obstructions.
- Again, leave at least three feet when passing bicycles, more room at higher speeds.
- Train yourself to scan for fast moving bicycles in the opposing lane to you when turning left.

Bicycles are considered "vehicles" so bicyclists must obey the rules of the road and likewise; cyclists must be treated as equal users by all other vehicles. Reciprocity is a fairly simple concept. So how about it, motorists and cyclists alike? Let's "share the road" and share our thoughts and prayers for Jeff Littmann. This Champion Icon of Cyclists will surely be missed.

NOTE: The Green Bay Duathlon will donate \$15 from every entry fee to the Bike Federation of Wisconsin. This organization is a strong advocates for the education of "safe cycling on the roads." If you would like to support "safe cycling" go to: bfw.org

Upcoming events:

Green Bay Duathlon
Sunday, October 10
7:30 a.m.
Lambeau Field
info: midwestsportsevents.com

Pacesetters Fun Run
Wednesday, October 13
5 p.m.
Bubolz Nature Center (free to the public)
info: pacesettersrun.com
St. Joes Pantry 5k Run
Saturday, October 16
8:45 a.m.
Menasha
info: pacesettersrun.com