

BC Bike Race – The Pacific Traverse Welcomes Chris Eatough!

On Thursday, May 24, 2007, Dave Howells, BCBR Media Relations Director, had the opportunity to interview Chris Eatough regarding his recent career highlights and his decision to compete in the inaugural BC Bike Race.

Here's how things went:

DH: Thanks for taking the time out to talk today. You have had a lot going on recently - just had a baby girl, congratulations; bike rider gone movie star in the recent release of "24 Solo"; and, a very dramatic 2006 24-Hour World Championship race. Did you have to regroup after all that unfolded?

CE: Well somewhat. The season ended with 24-Hour Worlds so there is always time to reflect after that event, so I think this is always a good time to look back on the year. You move on to an off-season mode with some rest and recovery, I feel there is a natural transition anyway. But there was definitely a lot to think about from last year. The big thing was we hadn't had the baby at that point last year, so we both moved into that mode so we were ready we she arrived.

DH: With the 2006 race behind you I suppose you have set your goals for the 2007 world championship in Laguna California. Are you super ramped up wanting to get back on top?

CE: Yeah definitely. I feel like I had a good race last year. I didn't win at the World Championships but I learned a few things that I can do better and as an athlete. I am always trying to improve, so to come out and win again would be great.

DH: How did you hear about BC Bike Race?

CE: Through the cycling media and different web sites. I have wanted to do another one of these races, so it caught my attention right away when I saw a 7-day stage race in BC.

DH: How does BC Bike Race fit into your season?

CE: Well, I do have some time during that part of the season; I didn't have any other racing planned. I find these kinds of races to be excellent training and preparation for my other races. I have done the Transalp race before and I found that I got really good fitness from doing that race. So there is definitely the training benefit but also there is the challenge of doing the BC Bike Race. *I have raced in British Columbia quite a bit over the last few years and it's one of my favorite places to ride and race.* So having a 7-day stage race through that area is a great opportunity to ride some singletrack and do some hardcore mountain

biking, this was really appealing to me. *But it's the challenge and the excitement of racing in BC that is bringing me out there more than anything else.*

DH: Who will be your partner for BC Bike Race?

CE: My partner is Jeff Schalk from team Trek. He is a cross country and road race pro here in the US. He is definitely an up and coming racer that is doing really well. He lives not that far from where I live so we are able to train together once a week so we will be familiar with how each other rides which is nice.

DH: Any other component to attending BC Bike Race that you would like to comment on?

CE: The camaraderie at these races is great. You do a long hard race every day and then in the evenings the meet the cycling community that is competing in the race - this is always fun. Lots of stories from interesting people about how they did that day as we all move towards the finish line together.

DH: You are obviously racing with Trek as you have done for most of your cycling career. I'm curious to know what you will be riding.

CE: That's a good question. I'm not completely sure. My race bike is a Trek Top Fuel which is their full-suspension XC bike. I have been riding a couple different versions of that bike this year. One is called a 6-9er which has a 26-inch rear wheel and a 29-inch front wheel. It is kind of a new concept. With the 29-inch becoming more popular, Trek's take on the 29-inch wheel is that the benefits are primarily found in the front wheel. I have been riding one quite a bit and I like it. Not sure if I will ride that at BC Bike Race, maybe?

DH: Are you going to bring a backup bike?

CE: I would like to bring a backup bike. Jeff and I ride the same size frame so that would work out quite well. Sometimes it is easier to bring a backup bike rather than bringing spares and parts.

DH: For a race like this will you do any specific prep?

CE: I definitely focus on endurance with my training and racing, so that doesn't change too much. But, as I said, I have been riding with Jeff once a week. We do rides that will be similar to what we will do for BC Bike Race. We will do a 4-hour session at a nice steady pace mixing in some high intensity on some technical single track and rugged terrain.

DH: Just out of interest how much road bike riding do you do?

CE: Yeah quite a bit, but I am a mountain biker first that's for sure. But sometimes the weather conditions will play a role in that road or off-road. Plus I can often find people to ride with when I am on the road.

DH: Let's get a couple quick answers on these questions: What do you like to drink before or after a ride - favorite beer maybe?

CE: Well coffee is my drink. Yeah, I definitely like my coffee. Beer is something that I will have occasionally but I am not a huge beer drinker.

DH: Do you ever ride to music? What do you listen to?

CE: I sometimes listen to music while riding. I have a pretty good variety of stuff. I have been listening to the sound track for the movie 24 Solo.

DH: If you could go somewhere for a mountain bike holiday, where would you go?

CE: *British Columbia is one of my favorite spots.* I also really like parts of the United States, like down towards the Tennessee area near the Smoky Mountains which is one of the more hidden mountain bike areas. You don't hear a lot about it but I have ridden down there quite a bit and the riding is pretty much as good as you will find anywhere else.

DH: What do you do when you are not riding your bike?

CE: Right now my little girl takes up a lot of my time, which is great! We do a lot of hikes together during the day. Because I am home with her during the day that is something that we can do together - get outside and enjoy some fresh air.

DH: That sounds great Chris, thanks for talking to me today. Looking forward to seeing you and Jeff on the start line for BC Bike Race - *The Pacific Traverse*.

CE: It's going to be great, thanks Dave.