Man Vs. World

Day 1 Left at 1:30- Very hot- neck hurt- 77 miles- got flat tire and by time I got it changed it was to dark to keep riding. Camped on side of road in woods. Tent and sleeping bag got soaked. Screw came out of rack, very wobbly.

Day 2 Left at 6:00 A.M.—got lost in Superior/Duluth, 10:00 A.M. found Ski Hut. Got new tires because old ones were shot, got nut for screw that came loose on rack. Left at 11:30, seat hurts crotch bad. Ate snack at Two Harbors and sat around. Left Two Harbors, crotch hurt because of no shammy cream and bike shorts being stupid and gel like. Knees started to hurt. Made it to Gooseberry Falls and found out I don’t have a camping pot. No Dinner! Low on cash. Tomorrow get cash and equipment. –75 miles

Day 3 80 miles—Gooseberry Falls to Grand Marais—got up at 6 A.M. and left at 7 A.M. Got to Silver Bay at 8 A.M. Waited for Aunt Leah until 11:30 A.M. She lent me $400 that I needed and bought me lunch. It was nice to eat a real meal. At 12:30 I headed out for Tofte. In Tofte I bought bike shorts, electrolyte tablets, and a camping pot. Then I rode to Grand Marais at a 15 mph pace. Bought shammy cream at the bike shop and sunscreen, lemonade, and bananas at the coop. I charged my phone at the wilderness supply shop and then biked another 5 miles to camp on the lakeshore.

Day 4 Got up at 7 A.M., left at 8 A.M.—decided not to eat breakfast because I wanted to try to find a gas station with hot water for my oatmeal because I was feeling lazy. The shammy cream worked excellent and the sunscreen worked also. My mission to find a gas station with hot water lead me all the way to the border where I ate breakfast, actually lunch because it was 12 O’clock. I ate my oatmeal and a snickers bar that I had bought and then exchanged $300 for $309 Canadian money. I crossed the border with no problems and set out for Thunder Bay. On my way to Thunder Bay, actually right before boarder, I learned that there are mountains on the north shore of Lake Superior. One of the climbs had to have been 5k. On the backside of that hill I had a long break from pedaling as I coasted at 30 mph down the other side. For a 50-kilometer section or so I was riding in a wide-open valley with steep cliffs high up on both sides but far enough apart so that they seemed like only small drops. My knees magically stopped hurting and I made it to Thunder Bay. After finding the bike shop they cleaned up my gears and derailleur for free. One of the employees, Greg, offered to show me where to find Huito’s and a camp sight but as we sere biking he said that if I was ok with it I could stay at his place. I got some groceries at Wal-Mart and then we went to his place. Ate some sausage w/veggies, and cantaloupe while watching Chris Froom win the tour. Got a shower also which was awesome. Its now 10:40 P.M. and I’m going to hit the sack. –143 kilometers today.

Day 5 155 km—got up at 7:30 A.M. and ate eggs and toast with Greg. At 9:00 A.M. we left the house and he gave me a draft for the first 30 km before turning back. He actually plans to do the circle tour some day. After he turned back things started to go bad. I had to take two craps and I got a bad stomachache. At about 12:30 my stomachache went away and I was riding well. When I got to Nipigon I took a lunch break. It was about 4:00 P.M. when I left off for Kama Bay. I hit a section about 10 km long that was half torn up for roadwork and that was a little bumpy. After that I came to an enormous hill, more like mountain, with a 7.5% grade and it took forever to get up. When I got to the Gravel River Motel where I was supposed to camp I found it was closed and just walked into the woods off a nearby trail and pitched camp. Its now 8:26 P.M. and dinner is ready to be eaten. I will go to bed soon and get up around 6:00 A.M. probably. Tomorrow is only 100 km to Terrace Bay.

Day 6 60 km today—got up at 6:00 A.M. today and made my oatmeal for breakfast. I got moving by 7:00 A.M. At about 8:30 it started raining, and then pouring. There were some 3-5 km hills on the way to Rossport. I didn’t stop at Rossport because it was off of the highway. My next town was Schrieber. On the Way to Shreiber I had to ride up a 6.5 km up hill. At points I found it almost as fast to walk my bike as it was to ride it. In Schrieber I stopped at a Robins donuts to get out of the rain and get some donuts. After eating half a dozen of donuts I left for Terrace Bay, which was only another 15 km. I found another good motorcycle circle tour map that was closer up than my other maps at a visitor’s center in Terrace Bay and looked up the weather. In the downtown I was able to send a post card to back home. As I was sitting outside the grocery store a very nice older couple, Roger and his wife, that offered me a place to stay. They set me up with a guest attachment to their house and free pizza for dinner. The guesthouse area has a queen bed, closet, dresser, TV, couch, fridge, stove, cabinets, microwave, electric teakettle, toaster, sink, and a full bathroom, also a little dinner table & stools & a rocking chair. I probably will go to bed soon, it’s about 7:30 P.M. They said they would feed me breakfast in the morning so after that I will head out and get moving. Tomorrow is supposed to be cloudy but no rain so overall not to bad. I think the high will be 18**°** C so it may be chilly on the down hills.

Day 7 Got up and left around 9:30 A.M. I had wind at my back to push me up the hills and make me fly down the backsides. On one downhill I hit 72.5 k/h or 45 mph. In Marathon I stopped and got a half dozen donuts and sent a post card. Donuts are not good after the fifth one. Instead of camping near Marathon I decided to ride with Yak, a rider that I met doing the cross Canada, and we headed on to White River. It ended up being 179 km for me but there weren’t any hills after leaving Marathon, and I had someone to ride with. In White River we ate dinner at Husky’s and showered at the gas station and at 11:00 P.M. finally went to bed in our tents, which we pitched out back of Huskies.

Day 8 Got up at 6:00 A.M.—got ready and ate breakfast—waited for Yak to wake up and eat breakfast. At 10:30 AM I just left because he was still doing his laundry. I was hoping that he would catch up with me but he never did. The first 90 km was easy and fairly flat but once I got to Wawa it got very hilly. I only took brief breaks because I had to average 20 k/h to reach Montreal River Harbor before dark. Between Wawa and Montreal River Harbor the only stops were campgrounds in Lake Superior Provincial Park. I had just enough water to get me the 110 km from Wawa to Montreal River Harbor but I stopped just 18 km short to camp at the closest camp ground in Lake Superior Provincial Park because I talked to a couple people there and one person said they saw Yack about 40 minutes back and I wanted to see If he would make it there by dark, another Lady told me that Montreal River Harbor only had a gas station and it was already closed, and then the third lady, Sarah, offered to share a campsite with me so it would be $20 cheaper. So I had a nice evening with Sarah eating and sitting around the campfire. I biked 182 km today.

Day 9 Woke up at 7:00 A.M. and Sarah was already gone. I packed up and left at 8:30 A.M. At Montreal River Harbor I was able to get water and some shitty brownie cookies for a breakfast. Then I headed out again for another 65 km before stopping again for water. The hills were pretty good along that stretch. From then to Sault Ste. Marie it was pretty flat though and I made great time. I just ate granola bars for lunch. In the city I got a donut—maple glaze filled donut—and from Tim Horton’s and a snack at Wendy’s. Crossed the bridge—called the family—sat around at the visitor’s center. Then I got a nice campsite next to the SOO Lock, took shower, and went out to dinner and got 2 meals. Went to sleep at 11:00 P.M.—150 km total

Day 10 Woke up at 10:00 A.M.—Drank coffee with old people at camp ground, left at 12:30 A.M. Got poured on as I biked through construction. Hid in storage facility while it gusted 60+ miles an hour with hail, rain and lightning. When the storm let up I found enough time to bike into Strongs and stop to get pizza. While I ate my delicious 12” pizza the lady told me about a tornado that went through Raco with golf ball sized hail! Earlier today I stopped at a gas station there and bought a 3 musketeers, an oatmeal bar, and a thing of cookies with 5 bucks that a nice lady gave to me to buy a snack with. She had heard that I was biking around the lake and she wanted to help out. Luckily I got out of there before the tornado! I got a motel room to get out of the rain and shower and dry things out. Hopefully the weather is better tomorrow. The terrain is very flat right now so I haven’t had to worry about hills at all and won’t have to tomorrow either. Only made it 40 miles today.

Day 11 115 miles—woke up at 8:30 and packed up and ate Oatmeal with craisins and raisins and then left the motel around 10:00 A.M. It was overcast all day but there weren’t any hills and it didn’t rain at all. In Paradise I bought a little motorcycle chain grease for my chain because it was getting so bad. Later on I had troubles with my front axle wheel and it started clicking again. I pulled over eventually and tinkered with it only half fixing it. By 8:00 P.M. I was in Grand Marais, MI, and I ate some pizza there. After pizza I headed a couple miles out of town and found a place in the woods to camp—off the edge of the North Country Trail.

Day 12 Woke up at 7:30 A.M., left at 8:30 A.M. and made it to Munising by 1:00 P.M. and ate a foot long sub with a pasty and two cookies with chocolate milk for lunch. Somehow between Munising and the campground outside my spoke broke and my back rim bent. Found a bus that can bring me to Marquette tomorrow to get it fixed. I went to Fogy’s restaurant and had a 16” pizza and then came back and went to sleep. 51 miles

Day 13 Rode the bus into Marquette today and got my bike fixed while eating French toast at a café. Got rolling at about 2:30 P.M. Had another wobbly tire problem but only had to bike about 35 miles to camp and when I got there another couple that was touring up to Copper Harbor helped me true it. There son did the circle tour last year as a 16 year old and this year he biked across the country—solo. Guess I’m not the only crazy 17 year old. Van Riper State park is where I’m staying.

Day 14 78 miles—Got up and ate breakfast around 7:30-8:00 A.M. and left by 8:30 A.M. It was a pretty easy ride and I had no problem until Baraga. In Baraga I got a flat on my rear tire, I ran over a staple. Since I had to change a flat I figured that I might as well just rotate my front and rear tires as well because the rear one had about twice as much wear because of weight distribution and it being the power wheel. After an hour I was back on the road at 1:00. The stretch from Baraga to Houghton was very fast and seamed as if it was all downhill. I got to Samirs house at 4:00 P.M. and ate sandwich and laid out my wet stuff and washed my clothes. We biked to the bike shop to get my bike tuned up and then came back for dinner. After dinner we drove down to a bike path with his family and did a short 4-mile easy little tour ride just for fun. Back at his house we watched an Australian outback comedian and I took a shower. Then at 11:00 PM I went to bed.

Day 15 Slept in until 9:00 A.M. and ate a huge breakfast. When I left at 11:00 A.M. from Samirs house it was dry and sunny. Along the way I stopped twice for pasties and ate a hand full of donuts and cookies. The hills were nothing compared to Canadian hills but they were still decent sized. The section biking through the Porcupine Mountains was so beautiful and fast. I switched time zones at one point and ended up getting to Presque Isle, where I camped, at around 8:00 P.M. Got to bed at 9:00 P.M.—95 miles—Houghton—Presque Isle

Day 16 The last day, Porcupine Mountains to Washburn Wisconsin. I ate breakfast and packed up by 8:00 A.M. today and checked out of my campsite. I spent a few minutes to admire the falls on the Presque Isle River and to reflect on past adventures where I hiked along side this river. After that I set out for Wakefield. I got a little annoyed along this section of road because ever half mile or so I had to slow down or stop for gravel patches on the road. I did a lot of climbing to get away from the lake inland towards Wakefield but it wasn’t at all a struggle for me. In Wakefield I stopped at the visitors center. I had an interesting conversation with the elderly man that was working there about the history of the area and the past coaches and athletic teams in my hometown of Washburn, WI. He gave me a free ice cream bar out of his freezer and wished me good luck on my final stretch. I stopped at the Wakefield pasty shop and bakery for a pasty. Then I went to the bathroom at the gas station and headed for Ironwood. My pedal to Ironwood was a great one because my mom and my brother would be waiting for me there with delicious food from Coco’s bakery in Washburn. In Ironwood I met my mom at Subway and she took my bags and we ate lunch. Only 60 miles remained on my journey now and I would be home. Without added weight I was able to average 18.5 mph from Ironwood to Washburn. I completed this section in 3 hours flat. I didn’t stop for water more than once in Ashland, and I charged every up hill like it was the last. This was the first time that I was able to say that I was truly excited to come back to Washburn. When entered Washburn I got a flash of adrenalin and my attraction to home grew even stronger. I turned left onto 8th avenue and started the last mile. A mile that usually takes 10 minutes of slow up hill riding was instead a quick sprint filled with energy and excitement. I turned onto hillside drive with my heart pumping and my breath out of control but I didn’t care. I was just feet away from home. I felt that I pushed myself the hardest in this last mile. I turned into my driveway and was relieved to be done. I could relax now; I no longer had to worry about what was to come ahead.