

## Central Coast Double Century

Eighteen bicycle riders labored up the steep hill. A thousand feet below, Pacific Ocean waves crashed onto the beach. A thousand feet above, the road disappeared into pine trees. Sweat dripped off their faces. Some riders had run out of water. A car approached. It stopped to refill empty water bottles. The driver encouraged the riders. "Only five more miles to the top."

This was the inaugural [Central Coast Double Century \(CCD\)](#), a 210-mile bicycle ride that starts in Paso Robles, goes through Cambria, up Highway One, then over Nacimiento-Ferguson Road to Fort Hunter Liggett. After a lunch break, the route continues north almost to King City, then back around Lake San Antonio, up to Bradley, San Miguel and back to Paso Robles.

This ride is Brian Stark's brilliant idea. 2019 is the 25th anniversary of the CCD. Brian expects 150 riders to start in the early morning hours of May 11, always the second Saturday of May.

The first time the ride was put on, only nineteen riders signed up. One of them broke a chain after starting. He jumped into a car and took over sag duties to help Brian out. (SAG is an acronym for a bicycling term that no one can remember. It means to cruise the route and help riders who need assistance.) The other eighteen riders completed the ride, 209.5 miles and 13,200 feet of climbing.

Brian initiated CCD to fill a gap. In 1994, there were seven organized double century rides in California (there are now dozens). They were either way north or way south of here. After the faltering beginning, it has become one of the premier doubles in the state. Riders love it because of the great support and the superb scenery.

In order to take full advantage of daylight hours, Brian starts the riders at 5:40 a.m. from Paso Robles City Park. The course closes at midnight. Typically, eighty per cent of the starters are able to complete the ride within the time limit. Brian conducts the ride with the help of about forty volunteers. He says, "Without them this event is not possible." Local Boy Scouts usually help out around Lockwood and Jolon. Cyclonauts Mountain and Road Bicycle Club of Paso Robles provide people to help with sag support and rest stop personnel. San Luis Obispo Bicycle Club pitches in with ice chests, water containers and other equipment. A group of volunteer HAM radio operators provide communications around the sprawling course. They use high frequency radios to communicate over the hills. It is important that all riders be accounted for at every stage of the ride. Much of the riding takes place in isolated areas.

Central Coast weather plays an important role in this ride. Route changes are not unusual. One constant, though, is food quality. Brian always engages local caterers who show off the best of their culinary expertise.

If you would like to join the ride, or if you want to volunteer to help Brian put it on, call him at 805-239-4397 or email [ccd@centralcoastdouble.com](mailto:ccd@centralcoastdouble.com).