

## CALIFORNIA TRIPLE CROWN COMEBACKS 2004

You did it! YOU have become a CalTripleCrown Finisher! Congrats to all! YOU have overcome so many factors that you **can** control; like conditioning, nutrition, and hydration. Beyond this, you have overcome uncontrollable factors such as weather, poor road conditions and inconsiderate motorists. There are some riders who have had additional physical challenges. They have conquered more than most of us. They are heroes in our own back yard. They are Comebacks! Please enjoy some of their stories...

**Update: Comebacks 2001.** In 2001, we had seven Comeback stories. Each of these individuals came back from challenges in 2000/2001 to complete their Triple Crown in 2001. Here is an update of their progress in 2004 (in parenthesis is their challenge from 2000/2001). "HOF" denotes induction into the Hall of Fame and the year.

**Ken Bartholic.** 2 Doubles. HOF03. (Bike/car collision, broken collarbone).

**John Beam.** 2 Doubles. HOF03. (Not bike related, jaw relocation).

**Charles Griffice.** 10 Doubles. HOF00. (Bike/deer collision, strained back).

**Frank Neal.** 7 Doubles. HOF04. (Bike/car crash, broken vertebra and punctured lung).

**Doug Patterson.** 8 Doubles. HOF02. (Paceline accident, shattered shoulder).

**Tom Romano.** No Doubles. He is Road Racing and skiing. (Bike related, replaced ACL knee ligament).

**David Nakai.** 2 Doubles. 46 career Doubles. Randonneur 5000 in 2001. (Car accident, broken neck).

**Update: Comebacks 2002.** In 2002, we had seven Comebacks. Each rider came back from challenges in 2001. Here is an update of their progress in 2004 (in parenthesis is their challenge from 2001). "HOF" denotes induction into the Hall of Fame and the year.

**John T. Claire.** 15 Doubles. HOF03. (Bike accident, broken collarbone and ribs).

**Mary Conte.** 5 Doubles. 42 career Doubles. (Not bike related, replaced ACL knee ligament).

**Ivey Henderson.** 1 Double. 28 career Doubles. (Prostate Cancer).

**John Robbins.** 5 Doubles. HOF00. (Triple heart bypass).

**Mark Martinez.** 5 Doubles. 26 career Doubles. (Pulmonary edema).

**Tom Miller.** 1 Double. 29 career Doubles. Tom is focusing on the FC508. (Bike/car accident, crushed leg).

**Frank Neal.** 7 Doubles. HOF04. (Solo bike crash, dislocated hip).

**Update: Comebacks 2003.** In 2002/2003, the following Riders overcame extreme physical challenges to complete their California Triple Crown 2003. Here is their progress in 2004. "HOF" denotes induction into the Hall of Fame and the year.

**Mike Burns.** 2 Doubles. 19 career Doubles. (Bike accident, pulled quad and groin muscles).

**Clem Bartolai.** 5 Doubles. 35 career Doubles. (Peripheral Neuropathy in ankles and feet).

**Dan Crain.** 10 Doubles. HOF01. (Bike accident, critically broken hand).

**Chuck Holmberg.** 5 Doubles. HOF04. (Undiagnosable muscular/nerve syndrome).

**Tom O'Kane.** 3 Doubles. 13 career Doubles. (Bike accident, fractured neck).

**Jerry Hlebo.** 3 Doubles. 6 career Doubles. (Chronic back pain, not bike related).

**Robert P. Thomas.** 3 Doubles. 6 career Doubles. (Bike accident, broken pelvis).

**Cathe Waltmire.** 4 Doubles. 25 career Doubles. (Bike accidents, broken ribs and two concussions).

**David Nakai.** 2 Doubles. 46 career Doubles. Randonneur 5000 in 2001. (Cycling related, ruptured disk).

### **Comebacks 2004.**

**Chuck Bramwell.** We start this year's Comebacks with a story about our Fearless Leader, Chuck Bramwell; a Randonneur 5000 Winner in 2001 and CTC Hall of Famer in 2002! During the rainy Mulholland Double 2004, Chuck ended off the road, twice. One was solo and one was due to a bike/bike collision. He cracked some ribs and severely pulled the intercostal (rib) muscles. His helmet saved him from possible head injuries. Of course, that didn't stop him from finishing the MH Double! However, it took him off the bike for a while and did cause him to miss the next couple of Doubles. He returned at Heartbreak, but had to pass on one of his favorites, Terrible Two! He came back to finish two more 2004 Doubles for a total of six. His career total is now an awesome 67 Doubles! We're glad your injuries were not more severe! Congrats on such a fast Comeback, Chuck!

**Ulmont Smith.** First, I want to thank Ulmont for his correspondence from Japan. Yeah, Japan! But, Ulmont went further! Oh, YEAH! He traveled half way across the Globe to capture a Triple Crown! Ulmont

started with the CTC in 1999. Just before TT02, he twisted his ankle during a half marathon run and tore his Achilles Tendon. In case you don't know: Achilles injuries, after age 40, are very serious! His rehab took a full year and added 25 pounds to his frame. He wants to credit two Southern California friends for his motivation: David Slaton and Mark Pickard. With their prodding, he got an exercise bike in Japan. He still feels, "Exercise bikes are the Ultimate in Boring!" About his friend Dave, "In many ways, his friendship was a great source of support and inspiration to motivate me to train, get rid of my extra 25 pounds, and try another Double! Cycling with Friends makes all the difference!" At the Davis Double 2004, Ulmont rejoined the CTC. In addition, he then traveled back from Japan to complete the GT and DVF. WOW! Ulmont you are unbelievable! Welcome back!

**Justin Barber.** Justin started 2004 by completing DMD, DAV, and ES while preparing for TT. He converted to a triple crank for TT, but it just never worked properly. During an early June training ride, he was bombing down a hill and stood up to increase his speed. When the chain jumped off the chainring, he endoed. His helmet saved his skull, but he cracked the acromion bone on the top of his shoulder blade. He stayed off of his newly repaired bike until the Friday before TT. He took it on a test drive; the chain came off, he endoed again, and broke three ribs this time! Upset about missing TT, he decided to ride GT the following week. In a great deal of pain from his broken ribs, he headed for Malibu from Nor. Cal. His plan was to stay in the saddle, ride nonaggressively, and never take a deep breath! Changing his riding style put extra pressure on his knees and his right knee began to hurt heading up to Ojai. He took his "rib pills" to kill the pain in his knee, with no effect. Incredibly he finished the Double! He says, "I just limped to the finish. I never wanted to finish a Double so bad." He went on to finish TOTF just to put an exclamation point to his Comeback! He says, "One rider, one bike, the open road and NO constraints!" Amazing Comeback story, Justin!

**Anna Catharina "Cat" Berge.** A Triple Crown finisher in 2002, Cat trained for the CTC Stage Race 2003 on a tandem with Paul McKenzie. In late February 2003, she partially tore her ACL knee ligament while skiing. Doctors chose a conservative, non-surgical, course of treatment. Her injury was not considered a "deadly blow" to her cycling. But, Cat was not able to train during the spring. Her goal was to ride strong by Terrible Two. Was she successful? Oh, yeah! She and Paul set a course record of 11:42 at TT 2003! She punctuated her 2004 Comeback with a legendary performance at Terrible Two. She rode the course, solo, twice; back-to-back! She set a new "Horrible Four" record of 26:33. Plans for 2005 include riding Solo RAAM. She is philosophic; "I realize how important it is to face hardship with a positive approach." Cat, You're Awesome!

**John Hopkins.** John finished his first CTC Double at Grand Tour 2002. During a training ride in fall 2003, he was coming down Circle R in North San Diego County. He rounded a right hand curve at 35 mph. A coyote decided to cross the road at the same instant. The coyote hit John's front wheel and took the bike out from under him. John landed on his right shoulder and broke his upper right arm bone. The break was near the humeral head and required two surgeries and a titanium plate to put it back together. But, "I never doubted I would ride again", he says. John was back on the bike in 7 weeks and training for Doubles. In 2004, John returned to the CTC with a strong Comeback. He joined the Thousand Mile Club by completing five Doubles: HM, MH, ES, HB, and TOTF. Great job, "Coyote" John!

**Reid Walden.** We missed a great story from this Comeback Guy in 2003. Here it is! Starting with his first Triple Crown in 2000, Reid's goal was Paris-Brest-Paris 2003. His training continued until a final training ride for the Winter Solstice Double in December 2002. On a wet descent, he crashed and broke his femur. Was that it for PBP 2003? His doctor said, "You can do it!" So Reid set out to train for his Comeback. He successfully completed the Brevet Series of Events that he needed to qualify for PBP 2003. He was back to Doubles by the end of April with a finish at DMD 2003. He continued with finishes at DAV and TT to capture his Comeback Triple Crown before heading to Paris. In August 2003, he completed PBP (757 miles) in 65 hours! Great Comeback, Reid!

**Mike Curren.** For the first time, I have no story to write. This is Mike, in his own words. Be enlightened: "In May 1996, I was playing in a tennis tournament when I had a stroke. My arm became completely limp. I could not speak. Before this time, I had only bicycled occasionally, and my longest ride was the Lighthouse Century. With a very weak right side, I found the best exercise was the exercise bike. I would strap my hand to the bike. Seven months later, I got on a road bike and did 13 miles around Los Osos. Then our SLO Bike Club got this idea to have everyone ride 2000 miles in the year 2000. I rode 20 centuries that year. Toward the end of the year, I rode my first Double, Route 66. I was hooked! In 2001, I rode 5 more Doubles. My inspiration is the riders, such as David Nakai and Tom Fante, who have both inspired and encouraged me. Setting goals and meeting them has led to more goals. My words of wisdom are, Do Doubles! You get to see

California in a different way and meet lots of nice people.” Editors note: Mike has now completed a total of 18 Doubles. Go Mike!

**Sandra Summers.** You probably know her by her patented bright smile! Sandra joined the CTC in 2000 by completing 11 Doubles, while smiling the entire time! Unfortunately, the Mulholland Double in April 2004 was unkind to her. Riding along Pacific Coast Highway, Sandra was struck by a speeding car. She was hit hard enough to be thrown a long distance. The extent of her injuries required an airlift to UCLA Medical Center. She sustained broken ribs, collapsed lung, broken hand, fractured skull, broken eye socket, and internal injuries among many other injuries. She spent 21 days in the hospital. Then, 7 additional days in a homebound bed. Her cycling season, and maybe her cycling career, was over. Well...Not exactly! A vacation cycling trip across Europe had already been booked for the Fall of 2004. Sandra decided the best way to stay in shape was to train for the Grand Tour Double on the back of Roger Macomber's tandem. Incredibly, she was back on the tandem in 9 weeks! She came back by finishing the GT Double after only two months! Then she, Roger, and their bikes boarded a plane for Europe and a 35-day, 1,400-mile, bike tour. Sandra says: "Enjoy the blessing of your life. Literally, the last thoughts I remember before the accident were that I was the luckiest girl in the world. The sun was shining, the ocean was beautiful (after torrential rain earlier in the day) and it was time for dinner with only 40 miles to go. If I had died, I would have wanted people to have peace knowing I was doing what I loved. I am overcome with gratitude and I will always treasure each and every wonderful person with whom I've had the privilege to share so many cycling adventures, and whose expressions of support and encouragement hastened my recovery immeasurably." Sandra you are amazing! It's great to have you back!

**Honorable Mention 2004.** Some of our Rider Friends have had challenges that prevented them from completing their Triple Crown in 2004. Or, may challenge them in 2005. We wish "Tailwinds" to the following for great riding in 2005.

**Cindi Staiger.** Cindi's ultra distance accomplishments include winning her class in RAAM 1988. In 1992 she joined the CTC; setting course records at several Doubles. By 1999 she had completed 28 Doubles, Triples and the GT Quad. In 2000, she was training solo in the Santa Cruz Mountains. She doesn't remember the accident. The airlift to the hospital was her next memory. Injuries included broken ribs, a broken clavicle and three broken teeth. She came back and was riding strong until a morning ride in 2002. An x-ray machine and a pelvis broken in three places were her next memories. This Comeback was more difficult because long hours in the saddle were painful on her pelvis. In 2004, Cindi couldn't resist the allure of the 10<sup>th</sup> Anniversary CC Double. Then, the Davis Double called her! She realizes how much she misses ultra distance and expects to complete, at least, a Triple Crown in 2005. Welcome back, Cindi!

**Darryl MacKenzie.** A four-time Triple Crown Winner, Darryl was having a great year in 2004 when it was ended by a paceline crash at Grand Tour 2004. Reconstructive surgery on his right elbow was the final result. Darryl tried hard to overcome the surgery and regain his fitness in time to finish Death Valley Fall to gain another Triple Crown. Time to regain his fitness just ran out. He tried DVF04, but it was just too soon! We look forward to seeing you flying in 2005, Darryl!

**Cathe Waltmire.** After coming back from two bike accidents, Cathe was a "Double Comeback" in 2003. After completing four 2004 Doubles, she was training for Knoxville when the rubber left the road again on the tandem she was stoking for Wick Waltmire. This time, she broke her pelvis along with sustaining another concussion. You probably know Cathe. When she and Wick are not riding a Double, they are volunteers. You would recognize her laugh, as it is always present whether she is riding or volunteering! Best Wishes, Cathe, for a speedy recovery and we look forward to seeing you in 2005!

**Comeback Stories.** We thank the Riders, above, who shared their stories with us! In 2005, there will be new stories. If you are a Comeback Story, or you know of a Comeback Story for 2005, please contact Chuck Bramwell at [CBrams@CalTripleCrown.com](mailto:CBrams@CalTripleCrown.com). It has been my privilege to share stories with so many TRULY AWESOME Riders. We wish, "Tailwinds to All!" – Frank Neal, CalTripleCrown Comeback Guy.