



The

Blurb



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In It for the Long Haul



Another Great
MS150 in the Log!

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Image from
W4GMN

Another Successful MS 150!

Thanks to everyone who came out and helped make this year's ride a success!

The alarm goes off. The sun isn't even above the horizon. You roll over and plant your feet on the floor, review your checklist again, grab your gear and head out. Maybe you've been assigned to a SAG vehicle. You might be heading to your GPS coordinates as a route coordinator. Maybe you're headed to repeater HQ for a full day of traffic handling. You check your watch. It's time.

Out before the rooster crows, radio and coffee in hand, you make your way to your position in the field. There's still dew on the ground but the radio traffic has already started. The event repeaters



are already lit up and traffic is constant. It's going to be a busy day. Nearly 150 amateur operators came out this year to offer their skills and equipment to support the many, many cyclists riding to raise money for the fight against Multiple Sclerosis. Taking your spot, the sun is just above the horizon as you hear the first riders are already at mile 7. Won't be long now. The day has begun.

And what a fun day it was! The cyclists in their colorful jerseys streamed by for hours. Some in tight pacelines, the lead shouting instructions back like a trained race team. Others were more laid back, with decorated helmets and music playing loudly through powered speakers on their bikes. The radio traffic was constant and professionally handled. Each SAG vehicle was tracked with APRS beacons installed by AJ3DI (top right) so event staff could track their position along the 150 mile route.

Linked repeaters were installed at the north and south ends of the route. Backup frequencies, simplex for chatting and 1-1 qsos were assigned, as well as secondary talk around channels repeated for additional information flow. As a formal radio event we used mile markers as our primary calls, using our station's call at the end of transmission for ID. Medical service vehicles, bike mechanic vehicles and motorcycle support were all tracked by radio, giving central command a clear vision of resource locations throughout the two day event. Offering our skills as a public service is a cornerstone of our club's values, and it's an amazing thing to be a part of. Look at the smile on Phil - N3ZP's face (mid-left) as he stops for a selfie during his day as route coordinator.

It wasn't just Phil who was happy to be outside. This year the weather could not have been better. We and the cyclists were





MS150 2021



fortunate enough to have a spectacular Pennsylvania autumn day. Clear skies, low humidity and light breeze made for an ideal weekend all around. Well, at least for Saturday. Sunday the breeze was variable and coming from the west making the ride back to Philadelphia a little more challenging than the ride east to the shore. A few complained as they passed, letting off a little steam before riding on with a smile.

If cyclists got into trouble the ride offered multiple support vehicles to help get them on their way. The most common repair was changing a flat. Sometimes things were a little more involved. That's why bike mechanics were there to help in rolling bike shops keeping riders on the road. This

mechanic replaced a spoke mid-ride (top-left) for an unlucky cyclist. He reportedly made short work of it, finishing up in just a few minutes. Very impressive work to complete that job on the side of the road.

When your shift was over you could head to one of the many rest stops and grab a bite along with the riders. Snacks and drinks were provided to keep everyone on the road, and they were very welcome after long hours roadside.



After the end of the first day everyone was welcomed to the big tent to join in the spaghetti dinner. The tired riders having crossed the state on two wheels dig in to what must have been one of the most welcome and delicious meals of their lives. After hours and hours of exercise every bite tasted like 3 star michelin fare. The smiles and sighs of the cyclists confirmed this as they refilled their tanks for the

next day's ride. An adult male riding at 15mph for eight hours can burn up to 6500 calories. That is a lot of spaghetti.

As all things do, the event comes to an end for all of us. The last person you see on duty is the sweep vehicle (bottom-right) coming to release route coordinators from their shift for the day.

And Sunday afternoon that's just what happened. The last cyclist rode to the finish line, the last operator was released from duty and the 2021 MS 150 came to a close. Thanks to everyone who came out to volunteer. Hope to see even more of us in 2022! -W4GMN

