

Let's talk about the beautiful glorious days of racing that I post online and people admire it hoping to be in my place someday. Let me put you there today.

Race Day schedule: - Getting up early in the morning, freshen up, dress up, warm up and leave to reach the start point on time. Now, what would you expect? Race briefing, signing and flag off. Then you are wrong!

Welcome to India!

Next and the most important step. Waiting for the MANTRIJI (minister). Riders all glycogen loaded, hydrated and warmed up are gonna spend God only knows how much time waiting for the flag off. Yes, the reasons may be different but there has to be one and now you are going to race in the heat of the sun due to delays. By the time the flag off is taken place the riders have already urinated several times and the body has cooled down. The exact reason for me not warming up before the start or even considering to properly hydrate myself.

Race flagged off:- Now's the time to use our strength and mean strategies to form a breakaway and win the race. LOL. All that energy is going to be used to dodge those potholes and weaving through the traffic. And just in case you somehow manage to break away, sorry buddy; there's probably a traffic jam at the next junction waiting for you. All those efforts in wane. Of course, how did I forget that you have done your sprint training well and probably sitting at the back of the bunch waiting for the finish line? Best of luck for that because the sponsor probably wants to sit in his balcony sipping a cup of tea and watch our sprint to the line. It's going to be a GALI sprint(Thin road, dangerous sprint). Probably ending up with more X-Rays rather than trophies.

YAHOOO..!!

You won. Time to collect your trophy and then your price before leaving for home. Trophy collected, but cash price will be transferred. One month, two months, four months, six months, several emails to authorities and eventually realizing the sad truth, you have been cheated of your price amount. Sad but true.

The above events may not all together occur in one race. But this is what a cycle racer in India goes through. Majority of the times the person is not racing for the joy of it but because his family income or job is dependent on it.

This forces the rider to take several unfair means like chemical doping, cheating during the event by drafting behind the vehicle or getting pushed up a climb. Not enough volunteers are there to regulate these ill practices. Nor does the event organizers spend enough on dope testing. Timings are manipulated in selections as if no one's going to notice. Everyone does. But the authorities just turn a deaf ear after being informed.

Riders in India are treated more like entertainers than athletes.

No respect, no dignity.

You either ride for your own self-satisfaction or you are in the wrong place.

Several private organizers have a good race. No delays, good route, proper traffic control and even a snack at the end. Problem is you are banned from the official races after that.

No nationals for you.

Past three years I have raced for the joy of cycling. Being with guys with similar passion gave me enough joy to ignore the above facts. For me, cycle races have always been a Boys kitty party. If I ever would have taken it seriously I would have quit cycling within the first year.

Regards,

Meherzad Irani.

Don't have time to read the whole post right now?