

April 29, 2009

Todd and Stacy,

A while back I picked up a copy of the April issue of *Ohio Sports & Fitness*, and was dismayed to find that a different graphic had been substituted for the one I had carefully prepared (see first illustration below) to identify the various components of a road bicycle. It is certainly within the purview of the editorial staff to do this, and if what I submit can be improved upon, that's great, but there are just a few problems with the graphic that was published:

1. the seat post is mislabeled as the saddle
2. the saddle is not labeled at all
3. the label for the seat post isn't really on or near anything in particular
4. the label for the brake caliper is about in the right place...except there is no rear brake caliper, since the bike is a single-speed with a fixed gear
5. similarly, the rear derailleur label is placed correctly, except...there is no rear derailleur, again, since this is a single-speed bike
6. the label for the seat stay isn't really on or near anything in particular, and could be mistaken for the chain, rear tire, spokes, or left pedal
7. the label for the chainstay is on the crankset
8. the label for the chain is near to many other things to be clear and unambiguous
9. the label for the crankset is right by the right pedal
10. the label for the front fork is right by the front hub
11. the label for the stem is close, but too low, and is on the headset stack
12. the label for the head tube is on the fork crown
13. the down tube is not labeled at all
14. the labels for the tire and rim don't really distinguish these two components
15. labels for the seat tube, handlebars, and brake/shift levers are close enough, however, the brake/shift levers are only brake levers, since the bike is a single-speed, and "handlebars" is misspelled "hanlebars"
16. finally, it seems worth noting that the bicycle in the substituted graphic is a Masi – a brand recently added by *OSF* advertiser Century Cycles (there was a press release about this in the March issue).

Thus, out of 17 component labels, only 1 is completely correct. Another 2 are partially correct.

What upsets me most about all of this is not merely that it makes me look incompetent, nor is my main objection that this and other moves like it have cost *OSF* a good deal of credibility with the local cycling community, even though the magazine's success truly is important to me (more about that shortly).

Rather, what upsets me especially is that the average person who hasn't thought about a bike purchase for quite a while can't rely on *OSF* to provide clear, authoritatively accurate information. And I think that's something that should upset you as well – or perhaps 3 of 17 is an acceptable percentage to you.

I should also point out that this is not the first, not the second, but the **THIRD TIME** something like this has happened. For the April 2008 issue, I submitted a high-resolution map (below, second illustration) for a preview article of a local event, the Races at the Lake. Instead, a grainy, low-resolution, black-and-white aerial photo was used, with the race route scrawled in by hand. Gone were the reference numbers identifying the key points along the course that were described in the accompanying article, which was therefore rendered largely useless. In addition, a fragment of an e-mail exchange among editors criticizing my use of the word "chicane" was inserted in the article.

I brought these issues to Stacy's attention and she was sympathetic, which gave me some hope that the problem would not recur. For the June issue, I created another high-resolution map (below, third

illustration), which was actually published, but this time, reference numbers for the several notable points along the course were deleted from the article, again making it largely useless.

I again complained to Stacy, who again seemed sympathetic. Nonetheless, I put aside the two race preview articles I had planned for the August issue, due to a lack of motivation.

This became somewhat moot, however, when I was soon informed that I was now the cycling editor, and as such I was now **obligated** to submit an article for each issue, since the "Shifting Gears" column was the one editorial item in the magazine that **HAD** to appear every month. Considering that I'm receiving what is apparently the standard *OSF* compensation for its writers – in other words, nothing – this took quite a bit of nerve. Furthermore, I was told that from the August issue onward, I had to write about something that supported products or services offered by *OSF* advertisers. Anything else, such as local event coverage, would be additional.

All of this was quite a change from Stacy's original proposal back in March of 2007, which was to write training-related articles or something about the local competitive scene from time to time. I went well beyond that, sometimes submitting two articles per issue.

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If it hasn't come across yet, then let me make something as clear as possible: I am **sick and tired** of these shenanigans. Whether they are the product carelessness and incompetence, or else deliberate mischief (a possibility that must be considered), they show how little my work, time, and effort are valued. This can have deadly consequences to a person's commitment when they are doing something as a favor.

And I do not use the word "commitment" lightly. When Stacy asked me to begin contributing to *OSF*, I committed to give my best efforts to the magazine. I take pains to proofread each piece several times over, and as Stacy will confirm, I often polish the first submission considerably. A reference bibliography is usually included. Still, if something truly needs editing, I will make no objection; as Stacy will again confirm, there has been no protest from me on the several occasions when I have been over the prescribed word limit.

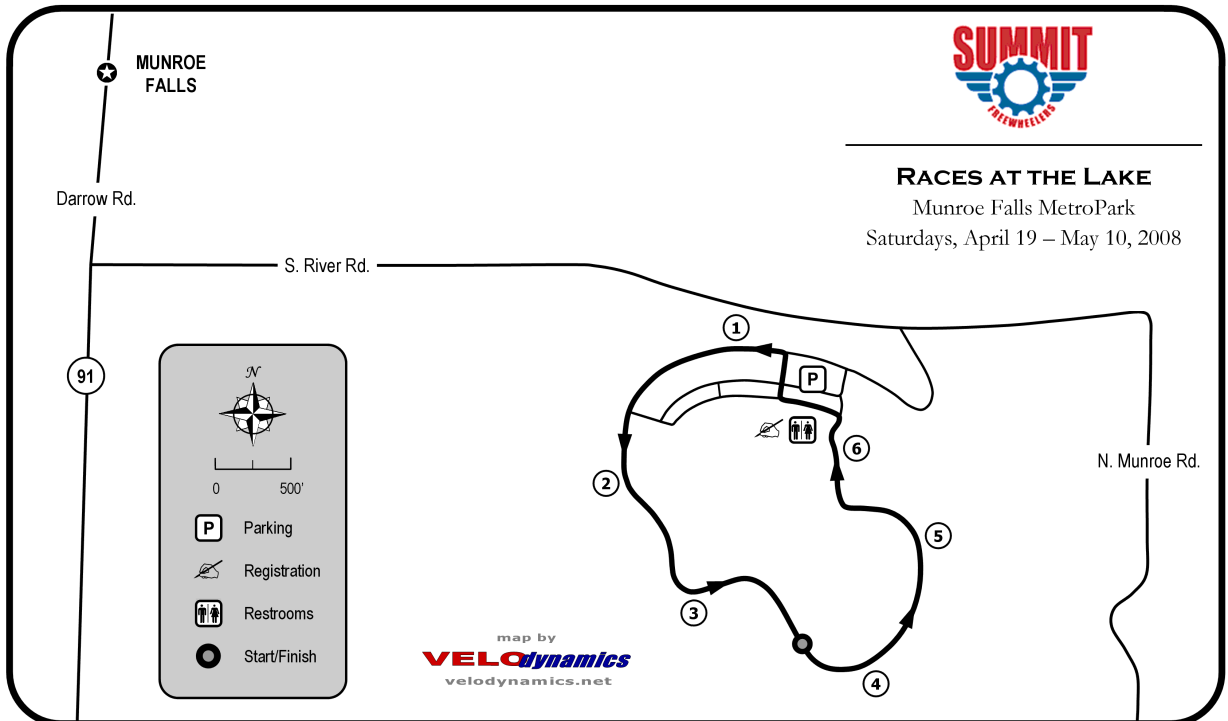
Part of my motivation was simply a matter of taking pride in the work I do, even if it is done gratis, but more to the point, I really do like and believe in the idea of *OSF*, which is to provide useful information to local recreational sports community through athletes who are active in that same community. It's a great concept, one I've appreciated since Christine Russell founded the magazine as *North Coast Sports*.

I might have been content with making a contribution to the local sporting community as my only reward – after all, the few other things I asked for were summarily rejected. I wanted to be allowed to write about running, since that's what I now do more than cycling; I proposed the purchase of some custom running singlets bearing the *OSF* logo, since most of the editorial staff competes in local road races, and this would be a terrific, low-cost way to increase brand identification; and I designed an *OSF* cycling jersey, which likely would have been a popular resale item, again, to increase *OSF* brand awareness.

Unfortunately, however, I have been brought to the point where I can no longer serve *OSF* as its cycling editor, until and unless the deficiencies in its editorial process are addressed.

Thank you,

Charles Howe





0 1/2 mi.

- P** - Parking
- Registration
- Restrooms
- Start/Finish

map by
VELOdynamics
 velodynamics.net