

# **D.A.D. 600 Edmonton Alberta**

June 17/18 2023

A ride report by Rob Nygren

How the Hell did I end up riding a 600k Brevet in Alberta?

I will try to be Brief.....

In my quest to qualify for PBP 23. I have completed my 200,300and 400k Brevets.

During Hell week I was signed up for the SRW600 in May, I got through most of the first day, over the hump twice riding from Nanaimo to Port Renfrew and back.

At one point I started getting neck pains and couldn't look to the right with out sharp stabbing pains, I would stop and stretch it out every 45 minutes or so.

The last 2 hours around the 320k I started getting a sore foot.

This turned out to be a gout attack, I made to the hotel at 365k. I was unable to ride any further after making it to my hotel for the night.

2 weeks later, I was figuring out my Gout meds plan but was sick and unable to do the Whidbey Wable.

A week after that I had signed up for the 600 in Kelowna, booked hotels in West Kelowna and Brewster Washington.

The cold never went away, so I canceled.

That was it for the 600.s in BC.

There was one in Seattle, another in Davis.

I looked in Alberta and Saskatchewan and settled on riding Edmonton, paid my entry fee for PBP, and adjusted start time to 6:00 pm.

I had a lot of help from Jeff Schmoorkoff, I joined Alberta Randonneurs, booked a flight and hotel rooms....I will talk about that later.

I got a few good rides in then I did 3 100k rides in 50 hours to make sure I was fit for the 600.

So off to Edmonton I go.

I chose a cheaper motel that was 3 k from the start, I had no car.

The Roach Motel???

I have never smoked and have a hard time with cigarette smell in houses. There was a sign in the room that said NO Smoking!

I think they put up after the previous tenant died...I should have just left.

But Nooooooo, its close to the start.

The first night was hard enough, did I mention my room backed onto the Stony Plain Highway, only 6 lanes.

I didn't change.

The Friday night before the ride was brutal, I am wondering if you can do too much tapering before a ride. As I spent most of Friday in the room lying about.

If you can sit, don't stand.

If you can lay down don't sit

I did not sleep until 3:00 am, I went through a real dark period at one point I was up looking to see if I could get a flight home on Saturday.

My throat was scratchy from the nicotine, to get air in the room I had to open the window, but when I did that it felt like the trucks were in my room.

I was ready to scrap it. I got a text the day before From Fast Freddy Fowler about an inspirational story he just read.

I had thought of leaving at 4:00 as this was an option, and the weather report said 10-12 k winds blowing south all day, and stronger winds on Sunday coming back.

That plan went away, but I rallied and made it out the door and to the start by 4:50.

My only plan for the day was to make it Olds 240K, I had a Hotel booked, and if I was not up to completing, I could get a good sleep and ride back to Edmonton, no Brevet no PBP but a good couple rides.

If I was doing fine, I would check into the hotel, get cleaned up and head south. The plan was to leave Olds by 6:00pm get to Airdrie and back to Olds by midnight.....

Back to the Start Tom Hortons

I was riding solo, so obviously there was no one else there, I took a picture filled out my Brevet card and left. 5:00am

I was feeling better, the fresh air was clearing my throat and my head, I kept telling myself how I feel now is not how I will feel in an hour.

I was loaded with bagels, bananas and peanut butter I was off.

There was no south blowing wind...or tail wind, just a little wind coming from the west.

It is a generally flat route, only 2200m. of climbing in 600k, there was no traffic and wide roads with wide swale boulevards, the massive farmlands.

FYI no bushes to pee in.

28 k in I got to Devon {the D in dad, the A is Airdrie} a nice town, I only stopped to fill in my Brevet card and take a photo. There is a great ride down and up a hill over the river, some real climbing to get up the hill.6:11 am

The next town up was Leduc, I think that is French for John Wayne, it was 50k in, with 10 k of a strong tailwind.

My head was clear I was over the shitty night and feeling really good and positive. You make a right turn onto the 2A heading due south and the tailwind was now a cross/head wind.

I have 35 k to get to Control 2 Wetaskiwin, I arrived there to the Tim Hortons at 9:05, I took a break here my time was good I am on schedule.

The weather took its first turn of the day lots of headwinds and some rain as I headed to Red Deer 90 k away, I started with my rain Jacket on, and it was still on.

At one point I was riding 15k an hour in pouring rain.

It all went away about 10 from Lacombe, rain jacket off headwind not strong at all, I had a great 10 K ride, I stopped at a Starbucks in glorious sun. Feeling strong, I was off.

Fed up and fully caffeinated I was off riding in sunshine, but alas poor dork it didn't last, the rain jacket that was now dry, again was back on.

But off again in half an hour because 25 k an hour headwind showed up

I reached the out skirts of Red Deer around 1:45 pm and made a quick sarcastic video about whether to continue or go to Sylvan Lake { we have in-laws there}.

Getting through Red Deer was horrible I caught every streetlight, probably 20 stops from 30 seconds to 2 minutes....it still feels like I am trying to get out of town. At Control 2:10 this is only halfway through Red Deer.

About 30 minutes out of Red Deer is when the weather first got Real!

The wind is blowing Eastish cross/head wind, there are white fluffy clouds and sunshine to my left or east, on right or west are thick low gray to black clouds. You could see the rain about 2 k away.

My first thought was the wind would blow the dark skies away, but then I saw my first lighting it took a few seconds for the thunder that's a good sign it's a ways away.

The thunder and lightning got closer as I rode but no rain, What I could see happening was the white clouds were connecting to dark clouds and then I was surrounded. The lightning was closer and the thunder right above me.

Out of nowhere I had a strong tailwind, I thought this is cool, I'm riding at 30kph, it starts to clear up then there is no wind whatsoever and its warm.

I am now in sunshine when I feel the first rain drops, quickly they get bigger and more of them, in an instant the sun is gone and the sky opens up....It feels like I am riding in a car wash.

My only thought was FUCK ME!!

I have to stop riding for a couple minutes, it slows down. Did I mention I am in Farm Country...there are no trees to speak of or sheds or 7-11's it's a vast open space with a road running up the middle.

I rode for a while and the rain stopped but I going into a head wind.

My next thought was will titanium act as a lightning rod?

After that my only goal is again get to Olds, I looked at the weather reports not great tomorrow will be worse. I'm going to Olds stopping at a liquor store to buy a bunch of beer and ordering Chinese Food.

But the rain stops, and the sun comes out again, I am warm and dry within 15 minutes, the gray clouds are behind me, rain gear gone. I ride beautiful roads no cars lush green farms.

It happens again, but I find a tree to hide under like a sissy. I made a quick video on my phone showing the rain and suggesting I need a pep talk and send to my wife Fast Freddy and Alard.

Ann calls right away and has 3 gran daughters cheer me on

Go grampy go... I got a little verklempt and had a hard time talking without crying.

Again, the rain stops and I ride on, a few minutes in Fred texts to just keep going the rain will pass.

10 minutes of sunshine the pattern starts again, this time it's faster and lightning was 300 meters to my left and the Thunder was instant and on top of me, I could feel it like the guy with the pounding bass in the car behind you... but 20 times harder. This scared the shit out of me, all joking aside I was really scared.

The rain was hard and heavier than the other times, the water coming from my front fender looked like it was from a garden hose.

My glasses are fogging up I cannot see anything so I stop on the side of the road and for a few minutes I tuck my head forward and pull up the

collar of my jacket, The rain drops were heavy and hard a few got through the vents of my helmet it felt I way being hit by marbles.

It slows and stops.

As I rode through Bowden bang my back tire blew out, so I put in a new tube and go. A k down the road I hear a whoop whoop sound, I check the back tire and its split at the rim, with the tube popping out the side. I have a tire and was fortunate I caught it before the tube blew out I fix it and carry on.

I am not sure where I am at, then there it is ... the sign says Olds City Limits. I checked the wahoo 5 k to the hotel.

It rained lightly on the way to the hotel the roads were flooded I had to stop a couple of times to clean my glasses. I rode through what I thought a couple inches of water that was a foot deep...LOL

The Hotel is my control it was 67 k from Red Deer the time is 7:15 over 5 hours, it should have been 3.

I am thinking I'm done, Alard texts me Such Rides feel best after completion.

Jeff from Edmonton is texting me weather updates.

I talk to Ann after checking in, read my messages again and the weather improves. Fred says it all downhill from Calgary.



I had a quick shower put on clean gear eat another bagel, banana, some candy and a few gels and I hit the road.

8:01 I text Fred I am going out.

The next 2 hours were great, no wind. I am feeling great excited again to be out there.

Jeff calls me to tell me I am heading into a giant weather cell, at the first sign of rain get cover it might last 20 minutes. It should show up around 10:30. it is 10:00

2 more gels and its dark, I am hammering as hard as an old fat guy can. There are not a lot of sheds on the side of the roads here, but I am on the edge.

I reach the Airdrie Control another Tim Hortons at 11:00 no storm I get a coffee, a fritter and a pastry. I sit down to warm up... then they kick me out. They close at 11:00.

I eat the fritter in about 5 bites, put the coffee in my water bottle and eat the pastry while ride out of town.

20 minutes out town Jeff calls me checking in about the storm cell. It missed me finally a break. The roads were wet as I rode north to Olds, I was literally chasing the storm up the 2A. I could see thunder every few minutes to my right and this went on for over an hour.

With 20 k to Olds I had my first yawn, but there were no further incidents or accidents, just me struggling to get back, I hit the 7-11 at 2:35 I bought dinner and breakfast.

I am showered fed, and the bike is backed for the morning and I am in bed at 3:00 am.....the alarm goes off at 4:30 I turn it off and reset for 5:30, at 5:30 it goes off I hit snooze 5minutes later I drag my butt out of bed.

I look out the door Its warm and dry, I get dressed eat some chicken wings from last night and half a bag of chips with my hotel room coffee.

I don't feel great, but good enough to go. Geared up, I grabbed the bike and open the door. There's a flash, a rumble of thunder then the rain.

So much rain!

I closed the door, opened the curtains and sat on the bed and ate more chicken wings and the rest of the chips while I watched it rain, I have a short video because I don't think people would believe me about how hard it rained.

At 6:30 it was still raining....So I went back to bed.

At 8:15 I got up resigned to the fact I am probably not going to finish in time. Knowing the weather would be worse the closer I get to Edmonton. The weather reports said high winds from the North with gusts of 35-45 kph with heavy rain.

I left the hotel around 9:00 in what felt like November weather cold, damp and windy, I texted Ann because I didn't want talk because it would make me cry. So, she called me.

The math was tough 240k to go in 12 hours, a reasonable goal on a warm dry day. Today was not that, I was sure I could not complete it in time and talked with Jeff to let him know.

After an hour I had a nice tailwind and a slight downhill and thought maybe there was a chance. This ended quickly after I made a turn into the wind.

By the time I got to Red Deer I had a ride from the In-Laws from Sylvan Lake arranged.

Joe had to drive over 300 k to pick me up and drop me off at the Roach Motel then back to Sylvan Lake.

So thanks to Alberta Randounneurs and Jeff Schmoorkoff , Fast Freddy, Alard, Joe and especially to my wife Ann for all the encouragement .....

The roads in most areas were great, there were some places where road upgrades were happening that made it difficult to ride. This would be a wonderful group ride route, wide open spaces with lots of locations to refuel.

Rob Nygren

PS Sorry this wasn't brief.

