

Nisqually Valley News

The STP experience
'You want to do it again'
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By Tyler Huey
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After finishing last year's Seattle to Portland Bicycle Classic, Steve Youmans laid on the ground and said he would never compete in the event again.

Youmans, 31, thought he was being honest with himself, but he wasn't.

March came around and his memories of exhaustion and pain were pushed to the side. Before he knew what happened, Youmans was online and signed up for this year's STP.

"I really don't know why I did it," Youmans said. "It wasn't a conscious thing. Lots of thoughts came back from last year."

Youmans, a Yelm resident, concedes that he was unprepared for the race a year ago. He didn't have the proper bike and didn't train long enough. After finishing, he was exhausted and his hands had lost feeling.

It took three months for his hands to regain normalcy.

Youmans planned for this year to be better. He succeeded.

In crossing the starting line around 5:30 a.m. on Saturday, Youmans knew he was better prepared. He had a new bike that could handle 100-mile plus ventures and he'd been training for months.

He didn't reach the finish line until 7:45 p.m. A goal was set to reach Portland's Halladay Park by 5 p.m.

Youmans said he was able to persevere through mental and emotional exhaustion.

During times of rest, Youmans called home to update his wife, Cara, daughter Teagan, 5, and son Grayden, 2. Though, with 25 miles left to Portland, Youmans' family almost became his weakness.



Tyler Huey, Nisqually Valley News
With a new bike and one year of experience on his side, Steve Youmans finished this year's STP nearly four hours sooner than his previous effort

“I stopped at the last free food stop,” Youmans said. “I was going to eat like my fifth bean and ham wrap.”

“I felt dehydrated and thought, “You know, my family isn’t that far away. She (Cara) could come get me in an hour.”

But he didn’t pack it in. He’d come too far.

Through all of the sweat and sweltering heat, Youmans reached Halladay Park minutes before 4 p.m. and met his awaiting family.

“I was more prepared this time,” she said. “He sounded so much more confident (compared to last year). He sounded better during our talks.”

While accomplishing his time goal, Youmans initially didn’t seem too concerned by the feat. Instead, the moment seemed familiar.

After finishing this year’s STP, Youmans laid on the ground and said he would never compete in the event again.

“It was like replaying last year,” Cara Youmans said. “He said a few choice words and laid on the ground.”

But even Youmans knows he’ll probably be back for round three. Once the memories of exhaustion, dehydration and fatigue fade, he said he will more than likely sign up for next year’s STP on a whim.

Talk about déjà vu.

Youmans’ wife is pregnant with their third child and understands his feelings regarding the STP.

“It’s like child birth,” she said. “You forget about all the bad stuff, then you want to do it again.”