

'There was a lot of courage flying around. I'm lucky they recognized mine.'

BEN JACQUES-MAYNES, Bissell Pro Cycling team



DAN COYRO/SENTINEL

Thomas Peterson of the Garmin team wins his first-ever stage race Monday in downtown Santa Cruz as he takes the second stage of the Tour of California cycling race in front of overall race leader Levi Leipheimer, at right.

SURF CITY SALUTE

Bicycle Races

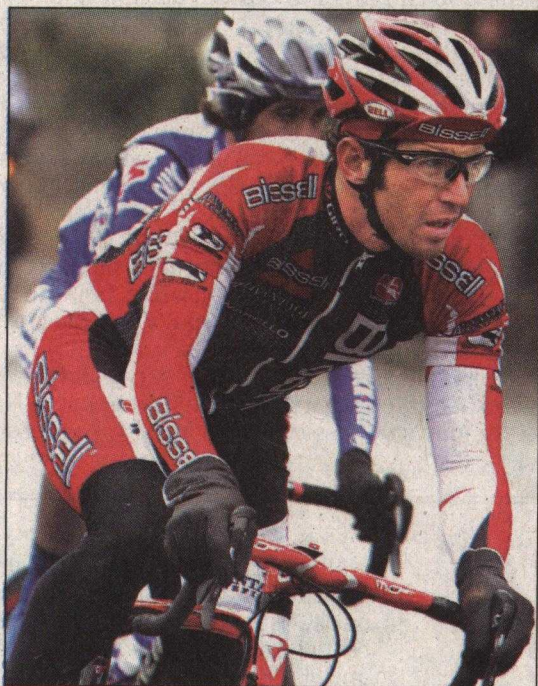
Local rider Ben Jacques-Maynes honored for 'Most Courageous' effort

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Watsonville's Ben Jacques-Maynes was given the Most Courageous Rider jersey after Stage 2.

SHMUEL THALER/SENTINEL



By JULIE JAG

Jjag@santacruzsentinel.com

SANTA CRUZ — In many ways, Monday's Stage 2 of the Tour of California was everything Ben Jacques-Maynes dreamed it could be. But it wasn't the race he'd hoped for.

The Watsonville cyclist got to take a spot on the podium after making a leg-decimating climb up Bonny Doon Road and a screaming descent into Santa Cruz along streets mobbed with fans, just as he'd envisioned when he helped design the local stage finish three years ago.

Instead of being lauded as the winner, though, Jacques-Maynes, 30, had to accept the crowd's booming applause while donning the tour's Most Courageous Rider jersey.

On top of that, his twin brother and teammate, Andy Jacques-Maynes, crashed near the Pigeon Point Light-

JERSEY WINNERS

For Stage 2

- Amgen Race Leader Jersey — Levi Leipheimer (USA), Astana
- Amgen's Breakaway from Cancer Most Courageous Rider Jersey — Ben Jacques-Maynes (USA), Bissell Pro Cycling
- Herbalife Sprint Jersey — Francisco Mancebo (ESP), Rock Racing
- Rabobank Best Young Rider Jersey — Robert Gesink (NED), Rabobank
- California Travel & Tourism Commission King of the Mountain (KOM) Jersey — Francisco Mancebo (ESP), Rock Racing

SEE TOUR ON B12



SHMUEL THALER/SENTINEL

Levi Leipheimer and Thomas Peterson go pedal-for-pedal as they reach the Bonny Doon Road summit at the intersection of Empire Grade.

TOUR OF CALIFORNIA

Stage 2

A 115.9-mile road race from Sausalito to Santa Cruz

1. Thomas Peterson, United States, Garmin-Slipstream, 5 hours, 6 minutes, 20 seconds.
2. Levi Leipheimer, United States, Astana, same time.
3. Michael Rogers, Australia, Columbia-Highroad, 5:06:41
4. Chris Horner, United States, Astana, same time.
5. Oscar Sevilla, Spain, Rock Racing, same time.
6. Kevin Seeldraeyers, Belgium, Quick-Step, same time.
7. Thomas Danielson, United States, Garmin-Slipstream, same time.
8. Robert Gesink, Netherlands, Rabobank, same time.
9. Grisca Niermann, Germany, Rabobank, same time.
10. David Zabriskie, United States, Garmin-Slipstream, same time.

Overall standings (After 2 stages)

1. Levi Leipheimer, United States, Astana, 9 hours, 23 minutes, 2 seconds
2. Michael Rogers, Australia, Columbia-High Road, 24 seconds behind.
3. David Zabriskie, United States, Garmin-Slipstream, 28 seconds behind.
4. Lance Armstrong, United States, Astana, 30 seconds behind.
5. Christopher Horner, United States, Astana, 34 seconds behind.
6. Janez Brajkovic, Slovenia, Astana, 38 seconds behind
7. Thomas Lovkvist, Sweden, Columbia-High Road, same time.
8. Jose Luis Rubiera, Spain, Astana, same time.
9. Vincenzo Nibali, Italy, Liquigas, same time.
10. Robert Gesink, Netherlands, Rabobank, 39 seconds behind.

TOUR

Continued from B9

house and arrived in Santa Cruz via ambulance.

"There was a lot of courage flying around. I'm lucky they recognized mine," the Bissell Pro Cycling rider said after finishing 28th, at 1:52 behind winner Thomas Peterson. "When you ride in the breakaway, you know it's going to hurt. But you know that and you still do it. How could I not do it? I knew from the start it would hurt, but I went with it anyway."

Peterson of the Garmin-Slipstream won the 115-mile stage in 5 hours, 6 minutes, 20 seconds. At the finish, he outsprinted fading Astana rider Levi Leipheimer, who took second but claimed the overall title and the yellow leader's jersey. Michael Rogers finished third, 21 seconds back.

Andy Jacques-Maynes, Lance Armstrong and about 15 other racers crashed around 12:30 p.m. when a car apparently made an unexpected move and bumped a couple of the racers. Andy Jacques-Maynes, who delved into pro road racing after suffering a horrendous crash while racing cyclocross two years ago, seemed to take the brunt of it. He was taken by ambulance to a hospital in Santa Cruz with complaints of injuries to his head and ankle, but a body scan turned up no serious injuries.

Both the Jacques-Maynes twins had been coveting the Presidents Day stage win ever since they heard the race would be coming into Santa Cruz. A former UC Santa Cruz student, Ben knew the roads from Sausalito down Highway 1 and into the Santa Cruz Mountains as well as the features of his own face.

So, when a small group of riders broke away shortly after the group crossed the fog-shrouded Golden Gate Bridge on Monday morning, Jacques-Maynes made sure he was with it. For the next four hours, he fought the fatigue in his legs and his brain as he helped the breakaway group grow its lead to more than four minutes.

As the 10 cyclists rounded the corner from Highway 1 to Bonny Doon Road, everything seemed to



SHMUEL THALER/SENTINEL

Tour of California riders head out of Sausalito during the second stage on Monday morning.

be falling into place to ensure a Jacques-Maynes win.

And then it all fell apart. The breakaway group that had been working so well together began to unravel as the riders' legs and wills burned out. It began to hail. And Leipheimer began to charge.

"When we hit the bottom of Bonny Doon, there were some attacks and I could see everyone was at their limit, but I felt great," said Leipheimer, a two-time Tour of California winner who got a little help from teammate Yaroslav Popovych. "I said, 'Popo, fire it up!'"

Leipheimer left the peloton and caught Jacques-Maynes about midway up the 6-mile, 2,100-foot climb. Then he blew by him.

"It was like a motorcycle passing you — a small motorcycle," Jacques-Maynes said.

Leipheimer, who stands a wiry 5-foot-7, went on to pass Carlos Barredo, a Quick Step rider who had tried to make a solo break out of the lead pack. Near the top of Pine Flat Road, he passed race leaders Jason McCartney of Team Saxo Bank and Peterson. Peterson glommed onto the defending champion's rear wheel and rode it all the way to the final straightaway, where he easily pushed ahead of the gassed Astana rider to take the finish.

"I did sprint against him, just



Ben Jacques-Maynes of Watsonville (center) gets congratulations from overall Tour of California leader Levi Leipheimer on the victory stand in downtown Santa Cruz on Monday. Jacques-Maynes was awarded the Most Courageous Rider jersey for the second stage.

DAN COYRO/SENTINEL

not against him because he didn't sprint," Peterson, 23, said wryly.

Many of the riders seemed impressed by the crowd turnout in Santa Cruz, especially considering the adverse weather that followed them through most of the race.

"It's horrible conditions out there — freezing, pouring rain. And there are thousands of fans out there and they're suffering like we are," Leipheimer said. "It's amazing."

Jacques-Maynes said the finish was "spectacular," and he seemed delighted by the crowd turnout. However, he couldn't hide his concern over his brother and his dis-

appointment that the race didn't quite work out the way he wanted.

"It always hurts, whether or not you lose. But, you can't win if you don't put yourself out there," he said. "If there are 10 guys in a break, only one can win. Or maybe not even one."

"It wasn't my day, but there's always tomorrow."

The 750-mile Tour of California continues today with a 104.2-mile stage from San Jose to Modesto that starts with the Category 1 climb up Sierra Road. From there, the tour heads south, finishing up Sunday in Escondido.

Wild weather adds to drama

Fans, cyclists alike endure the elements

By **KAREN KEFAUVER**

Sentinel correspondent

SANTA CRUZ — Levi Leipheimer described the weather conditions during Monday's Stage 2 of the Tour of California pro cycling race like this:

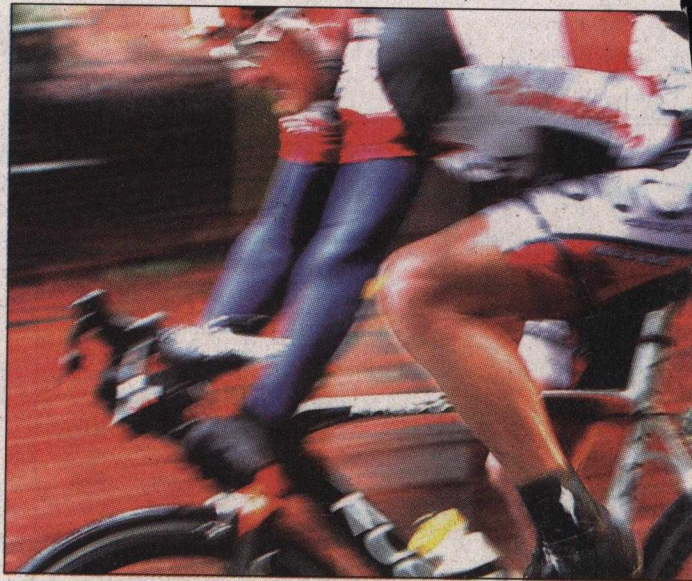
"Turn the shower on as cold as it gets, then stand there for four hours," said the two-time tour champion, who claimed the yellow leader's jersey Monday. "That's what it was like."

The sky unleashed hail, driving rain, drizzle and even some sunshine during the race. However, the 130 racers got a warm

welcome from an estimated 35,000 fans who gathered at the corner of Cooper and Front streets to watch some of the world's best racers — including seven-time Tour de France winner Lance Armstrong — pedal across a Santa Cruz finish line for the first time in the tour's four-year history.

In their third day of racing the nine-stage, 750-mile tour, the pack started at 8:30 a.m. in Sausalito, crossed the Golden Gate Bridge — closed to traffic for a sporting event for only the second time — and raced down Highway 1. The

SEE **WEATHER** ON **B12**



SHMUEL THALER/SENTINEL

Cyclist Floyd Landis screams down Empire Grade in Stage 2 of the Tour of California on Monday.

WEATHER

Continued from B9

riders completed the challenging 115.9-mile ride, part of the biggest professional bike race in the United States, at about 2 p.m. Thomas Peterson of the Garmin-Slipstream team won the race in 5 hours, 6 minutes, 20 seconds, with Leipheimer right behind.

Though the sun peeked out in time for the racers' arrival, the riders were challenged by the elements all the way to the end.

"I told [tour director] Jim Birrell I was cursing him for making us go the long way around Santa Cruz. Around that final corner there was a massive headwind," Leipheimer said. "I think I lost 30 seconds in the last 3 [kilometers]. But the people of Santa Cruz

deserve a show, right?"

They certainly got one. Armed with umbrellas, raincoats, ponchos and waterproof pants, throngs of people three to five deep were undeterred by Mother Nature's unpredictable behavior, which included sudden downpours even after the rain had mostly abated.

"It was brutal," said Wendy Bowers-Gachesa of Watsonville, who was pelted by hail as she watched the race from the side of Bonny Doon Road, the site of the second and final climb of the stage. "We were out there for two hours. It was hailing, drizzling, then hard rain, more hail. For about 10 seconds, there was sun. My car said the temperature was 39 degrees."

From the racers' perspective, the conditions were even worse. Leipheimer got

so chilled he bundled up in a hat and two jackets for the post-race press conference held at the Santa Cruz Veterans Hall.

"It was hailing in Pescadero and the coldest point was on Skyline," said Ben Jacques-Maynes, a Bissell Pro Cycling racer who lives in Watsonville with his wife, Goldi, and their two young daughters. "The cold seeps into your legs. The wind and rain wears on everyone."

Despite the cold, Bowers-Gachesa, a nutrition instructor at West Valley College and an avid cyclist, had no regrets about her Bonny Doon vantage point.

"The vibe was really good up there," she said. "There were a lot of spectators and it was an exciting race. I just wish they were slower so I could have seen them for longer!"



Bike race fans, jostling for position near the finish line, get excited as the racers enter the final straightaway in downtown Santa Cruz on Monday.

DAN COYRO/SENTINEL