

CASCADE 1200.....SEATTLE

I really enjoy the Cascade 1200, which is why I've done it twice. Both years were very hot, but the scenery is very good and the support staff is excellent. It is organized very well and seems to follow the "Scandinavian Style" I'm told. The idea is that all of the participants spend at least part of a night at a common spot (a school on two nights and a resort the final night). This is why most of the times cluster in the 80 hour range. Apparently the course was longer than 1200 K this year so they gave us additional time. I think we had 94 hours or so to complete the ride. I didn't have a camera this year. There are lots of pictures on the web site. We took some pictures on my brother's camera but this was mostly on the last day. I'm not too good about doing write ups. There are two so far: one on the Cascade website and another on the Rando/Google site. I would definitely recommend this ride. Some people feel that the Rocky Mountain ride is better. I will let you know my opinion after I ride that later this month. I find it hard to compare rides. They all have their high points and challenges. I also hope to complete the Last Chance in September. I don't think that will be as scenic as the Cascade or Rocky Mountain 1200's. (I think we should consider organizing a "Star of the North 1200" sometime.)

Rocky Mountain 1200BRITISH COLUMBIA

This ride was the most scenic I have been on with lots of mountains, rivers and lakes to look at. The ride was very well supported, although some of the food stops were spaced pretty far apart. The roads were typically busy but there were ample shoulders to keep us away from the semis and recreational vehicles. I would definitely do this ride again. My advice would be to bring warm clothes as it gets cold in the mountains at night.

The Last Chance 1200.....COLORADO

The Last Chance 1200 contrasts with the Rocky Mountain. Although it starts near Boulder, it heads east through mostly flat or gently rolling country. It is relatively easy to stay on course since most of the ride is on U.S Highway 36. Even though this was our "last chance" to get in a domestic 1200 this year, the ride actually takes its name from a small hamlet in eastern Colorado. Apparently, there is a strong likelihood of winds on the return trip, but we didn't have much wind then entire trip. This, combined with the flat terrain, made for a brisker than average pace. Many of the riders set personal bests and/or qualified for RAM. My brother and I managed to set a personal best for the amount of sleep. The people in the small towns we passed through were very friendly. Before the ride, the scenery was described as resembling watching TV nonstop for 90 hours..... with the set unplugged. This turned out to be a slight exaggeration. The gradual change in hues from light browns to darker greens as we moved east was especially striking. Even though we had a good time, I don't feel quite as eager to repeat this ride.

To sum up, my brother and I had a pretty full summer with 4 and 3 Randonnees respectively, but neither us is the worse for wear and at least one of us may have emerged slightly wiser from the experience. If anyone has specific questions about these rides, I'd be glad to hear from them.

Mark

For the ambitious randonneur, there is the [American Randonneur Challenge](#). This is awarded by RUSA to anyone who finishes two or more of the US 1200k events in a single season.