

## Part 17

By the time I got to San Bernardino the sun was up and I was cruising toward San Timiteo Canyon. We didn't get lost on Rt. 66 this time. The morning was still sunny and cool and I felt as fresh as a club cyclist going on a morning breakfast ride. The climb back up the Canyon was a steady 3% grade and I made good time getting to the towns of Banning and Beaumont at the summit. The crew needed to stop for gas and groceries and they said they would catch me in a few minutes. What neither of us realized is that I would pick up a whipping 30 mph tailwind in combination with the 5% downhill to Palm Springs. I was spinning out in a 54 x 13 gear as I headed down Interstate 10 into the desert. My new Specialized Allez bicycle felt good at 40 mph. After 20 minutes I had traveled over 12 miles.

The cool morning was getting hotter and hotter the lower and lower I dropped into the desert. Where was the support car? I wasn't worried about getting lost. I knew the route because I had just ridden these roads yesterday. I was getting concerned about my water supply. I had drunk both my water bottles. After another 10 miles I was entering Palm Springs. I was getting really hot. My tongue was dry and I was starting to look for somewhere to get some water.

I pedaled past country clubs and noticed their lawn sprinklers and fountains. I saw an imitation waterfall near the front gate of a fancy resort. I rode my bike up to the pool of water and dipped my water bottle in the pond. I poured a bottle over my head and soaked my jersey. It was now over 100 degrees. I filled my water bottles and started riding again. I didn't want to drink the fountain water but I was getting pretty cooked. I didn't have my

wallet or any pocket money so I couldn't buy anything cold to drink at the corner gas station.

It was now over an hour since I had seen my support car. Within a few minutes the crew came up from behind me. They had thought they missed me and they turned around when they couldn't find me after 20 miles.

We had a few words. I said "From now on, for the rest of the trip, we need to make a plan if we are going to split up and make sure I have a full water bottle". The incident made everyone realize how much we needed to keep working together. We could not get sloppy with our focus or our planning. We had crossed the country once and made a few mistakes. Now we were supposed to know what we were doing. There would not be any more time to make mistakes if we wanted to set the record.