

"I swear by FRS anti-oxidant drink"

Todd Herriott
Professional Cyclist

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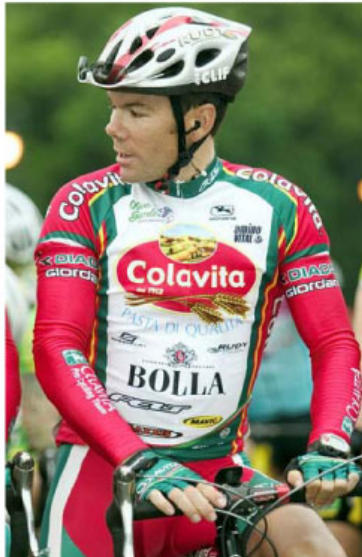
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Interviews

Todd Herriott: Second Acts

Ya know that Disney movie with Dennis Quaid playing a high school baseball coach who makes it to the major leagues at the age of 35? Yeah, I know it sucked but you can't help but marvel at the true story of the pitcher it's based on. Todd Herriott turned pro at the age of 32, which is like being a rookie pitcher in the majors at 53. Obviously there is a combination of exceptional circumstances and an extraordinary athlete that allows for such a thing, but his story remains an inspiration bordering on myth for many who follow NYC cycling. Todd's big break came after he became the first American to win the Vuelta a Cuba in 2003 and he did it as an amateur! He was voted top amateur of the year by VeloNews, then promptly turned pro.



Todd is not a native New Yorker, but he's probably the only professional bike rider you will actually see in person this winter making his way out to Nyack along with the rest of us schmoees. Hell, they should probably give him a 30 second head start for training here all winter while the rest of the pros are soaking up the sun and the choice selection of rides in Cali or Arizona. But given his unique history and outlook he is a good fit for NYC and we are happy to have him. Its not like the Knicks give us much to be proud of these days...

NYVC What is the thing that surprised you most about becoming a pro, in the race and out of it?

TH: I was surprised at how much more intense the racing had become. As an amateur I had the luxury of not having to do the work at the big races, I was often a passenger that was sometimes able to take advantage of other people's work. As a member of a team with a role to play, I was the one doing the work because now it was my job. I'm suprised off the bike at how many guys don't present themselves in a professional manner. We are

representing our sponsors when we are on the road and how we ourselves reflects upon them. That doesn't just go for the pro guys, the amateur riders should follow suit. People remember how you act off of the bike as well as on. Little details can make a big difference.

NYVC You turned pro relatively late. How do you think your perspective is different than if you had done it a decade before, and do you regret your late start?

TH: I don't have any regrets with regard to how my career has unfolded. It's not the norm for

guys to turn pro after they turn 30, but then what's normal? If I had turned pro in the early 90's when I was trying to make my way in the sport my life would no doubt be a lot different, but then I would have missed out on some of the great experiences that I had after leaving the sport in '94. Of course there are times when I can't help but wonder what kind of rider I would be if I had continued, but then hindsight is 20/20. If I had stuck it out in the movie industry would I be directing feature films by now-I'll never know. I think my perspective would be a lot different than it is now if all I had ever done was bike racing and that's not to say that a pro rider who has done nothing but commit himself to the sport has any less perspective than I do-it's just a different one. The older you get, the more experiences you have, the more relationships that you involve yourself with-I think everyone's perspective changes over time. For whatever reason-lack of talent, timing etc. etc., I missed the boat on pro cycling back in the proverbial 'day'. But I'm here now, and I don't take one day of it for granted.



What are you most looking forward to next year?

I'm really looking forward to working with the TEAM. For the first time in a long time the same team for 2 years in a row and with a lot of the same teammates. The lead to get last season and with a new director and a few new faces I'm really going to be working with guys that I like and who like to work hard, laugh a lot, and win. There are a few races that I would like to be at the top of the results sheet. My secondary comes secondary.

What is your role on the Colavita team?

The team is that of a domestique. When it comes times for the team to chase, you're in the front. Often times my role is to cover the early move and sometimes my job is to lead out. Sometimes I will end up in THE move and then depending on the day I get a chance to play my own card. We always have a race plan, which often changes as the race unfolds.

Which domestic Pros are going to surprise people this year?

Pros that are going to surprise people this year? I'd watch out for Justin England going for Healthnet. Horner has left a void in the domestique scene and I think a lot of guys can step up now and fill it. A lot of the races will be wide open and with so many new guys, it's hard to say who is going to be winning all the races. Mike Jones has been a surprising people, but I think he's going to really make an impact in '05. I'd also bet that Jelly Belly is going to be stepping up too. There are a lot of guys on some of the teams that I've never heard of, so perhaps there's a sleeper or two in there. I also think that some of my new teammates, is going to really open some eyes. With a team that has a lot of talent, I think he may be the new stage race threat.

What is your favorite training ride in NYC?

My favorite training ride in NYC is the ride to Harriman state park. I'm also a big fan of the fact that they have some amazing homemade doughnuts at the store there.

What is your favorite Race in NYC? Best racing memory in NYC?

My favorite race in NYC is Bear Mountain, though I've never been able to win it. I haven't been racing pro as it always conflicts with my schedule-hopefully this year I'll be able to go racing memory in NY-remember that I only started racing there in 2001-would love to win the 2002 Mengoni Grand Prix. Myself, Joe Papp, and a guy from Holland rolled away with 1.5 laps to go and we made it to the finish with a full team of Navigators. I didn't win, but it was the best ride I have ever done in Central Park. I WILL be there before I retire-though it won't be in a sprint!



What are the biggest mistakes amateurs make in their approach to racing and training?

The biggest mistake amateurs who have a vision of turning pro make is trying to do it all. Learn to be patient and really learn about racing-it's more than just riding fast. Don't worry so much about what everyone else is doing. Don't mean riding hard all of the time. I know I'm jumping around a bit, but I know all good points. Don't pretend that you know everything-nobody does. Lastly, don't do the best that you can when you're out training and when you go to the race you'll be amazed at the progress you will make. Don't make the mistake of feeling this or that just because you've been racing for a few years. Don't lose your

Any tips?

My tip is to eat oatmeal every morning mixed with honey and peanut butter, I swear by FRS anti-oxidant drink, as well as Emergen-C packets.

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