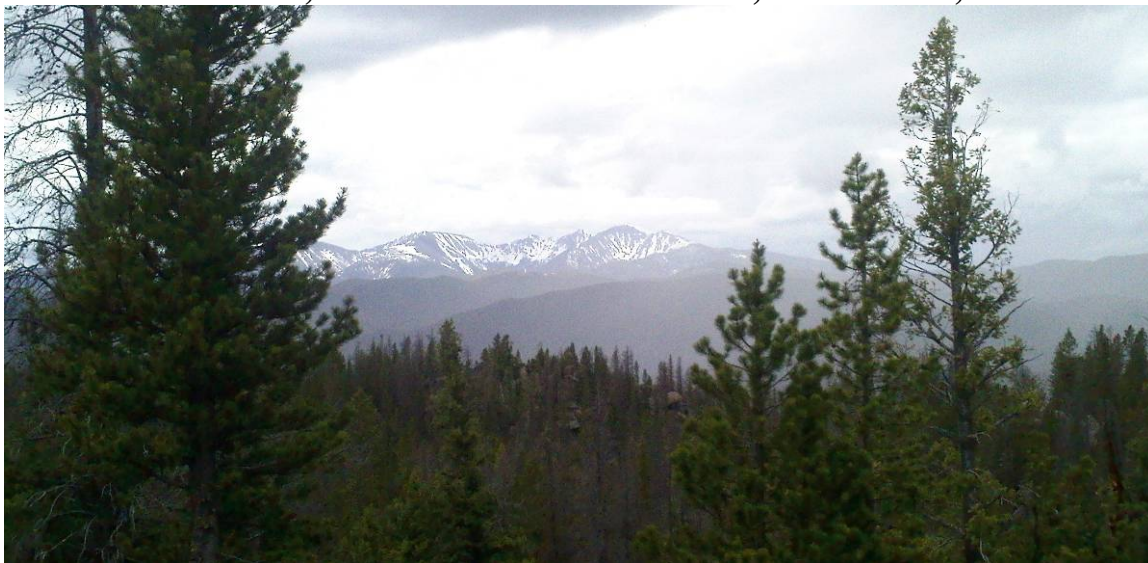


BUTTE 100, MOUNTAIN BIKE RACE, AUGUST 1, 2009



A early season view from along the Butte 50/100 course.

My first adventure of the month of August was a marathon mountain bike race in my home town of Butte, Montana. The name of the race is the Butte 100, but I participated in the 50 mile version, which I thought was challenge enough.

I had my eye on this event from the beginning of the mountain bike season and figured that I had a chance to win, provided Montana's best mountain bike racers stayed home. As it turned out, there were two of us, more-or-less evenly matched, who battled it out from start to finish.

But not without some surprises along the way, the major one being that we (well in the lead, already 30-40 minutes into the race) took a wrong turn, which we corrected only after a 10 minute detour. We took on the chase to regain the lead, accomplishing the task at around mile 20. And from there on out, we didn't relinquish it again.

At the half-way point (Pipestone Pass), I could tell that I was pushing too hard, so I slowed things down a bit for the next 15 mile grind. My racing companion (fellow Missoulian, and Dean of Boys at Hellgate High School, Ted Fuller) slowly pulled away. I figured I wouldn't see him again until the finish.

But with 10 miles to go, at the last aid station, I surprisingly caught him, and we set off for the finish line together.

With about 5 miles left to the finish, Ted again pulled away. Happy with a second place finish and not wanting to go too far into the "red zone", I let him go. But at the last major intersection, Ted went the wrong way, and so I ended up winning the race after all, finishing in 5:42:10.

I just have to say what a great course the Butte 50 is. It is really tough (8000' climbing), but is one of the best big loops I've ever ridden, with much of Butte's best single track along the way. In fact, it's hard to imagine a better course anywhere, and I'd encourage any interested in giving it a shot to do so next year. I hope to be back to defend my title.

Incidentally, from what I hear, the Butte 100 is equally awesome, and is significantly harder than the 50. This year's version had 21000' climbing! For lots of info on the race, see www.tripleringprod.com.