

INSIDE THE BUNCH

Richard Handley

Home stage races are the ultimate goal for the Madison-Genesis man

How would you rate the last race that you did on a scale of 1-10?

I'd say a seven at the Tour of Normandy. It was all going quite well riding for Tobby [Horton] who had gained some time from a couple of sprints but was unlucky to puncture on the one climb where it didn't finish in a sprint. So we had a bit of a nightmare there to get back and organised and just ran out of road.

What has been the highlight of your year so far?

The training camps in Calpe, Spain, were good as we were all in one big apartment. We played a lot of table tennis — Connor [Swift] was the champion. I wasn't quite on par, Neil [Van Der Ploeg] was pretty fast as well.

If you could win any race what would it be?

All the British teams want to get a stage at the Tour de Yorkshire or the Tour of Britain. It is always a long shot because it hasn't been done in the last 10 years for a domestic team, but it is definitely doable.

When did you know you wanted to be a pro cyclist?

It kind of hit me quite slowly, I gradually got into it through school and college and then it got to a point where it was university or bike riding. So I was around 18 when I wanted to do it properly and I was speaking to Team Raleigh at the time so it kind of all fitted together well really.



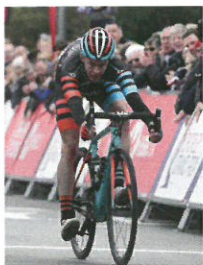
Handley is a believer in trying out all cycling disciplines

What is the best piece of advice anyone has ever given you?

I think the best thing is to spread yourself thinly when you are young and do a bit of every discipline with track, crits, time trials and road races, to just get a feel for all of them. I think there are too many young kids who think, 'Oh, I just want to do this.' But until you grow up you can enjoy a bit of everything and get experience doing all of it.

Who has been the most influential person in shaping your cycling career so far?

I used to, as a junior, do a lot of races with a man called Peter Kay; I used to go to Belgium, Poland and Tour of Ireland and he is good friends with Jon Herety. But Pete was the one who got me into cycling and did a lot of the races with us, so I learnt a lot from him in a short amount of time as a junior.



If you weren't a pro cyclist what would you be?

A chemical engineer. That's what I was doing at university and I deferred my place to ride and then when I stayed as a cyclist I turned it down. It's just general engineering but based around fluids and petrols or bleaches and the processes they go through.

Turbo or below-zero ride?

I'd say go out for a below-zero ride, between zero and four degrees is the turbo range but anything out of that is road. If it goes below zero it doesn't rain, which is always a bit better. So it may be a mountain bike day but I just absolutely hate the turbo. But Zwift is intriguing me so I may have to get on it.

What is the most annoying thing someone in the peloton can do?

I get annoyed when riders fight for wheels halfway down the bunch — you're in a bad position anyway, why bother fighting? Or when someone puts you in the gutter thinking that they are out of the wind, but they are on the wrong side.

LIFE ON TWO WHEELS

First bike A Trek 1200.

First race Wigan Wheelers 10-mile TT.

First crash In Belgium as a junior I touched bars on a straight concrete road and went straight over.

First win A time trial at some point.

First hero Lance Armstrong — I suppose at 12 years old you don't know any different.