



# CHRONICLES OF AN ADVENTURE, TRIP, AND BIKE RACE IN CHINA

## – PART III

by Adam Farabaugh

This is the third part of a sort of short book that I will post into blog posts for easier sharing. It is not a quick read so a PDF download is also available. Upon completion, I will post it in its entirety. Also, check out the site that this is listed on for peer-to-peer, locally guided cycling trips. A good friend of mine and I have just launched it and are trying to make it a big deal. Thanks for reading and your support!

*October 15, 2014*

*Race Day # 4 - WuNing, Jiujiang*

This race definitely has variety in where we go. We finally made it to a big lake but I don't think it was Poyang Lake. It was still massive though and had mountains surrounding it

with a big city on a sort of island or peninsula. It was interesting as on the outskirts, as we were driving in toward the city, there was endless construction of high rises that looked like it was going to be quite the place when finished. As we got into the heart of downtown it was a conflicting vibe. In the streets and sidewalks it looked like a rundown area but all the stores were super high end boutique shops. With all of this there were also tons of people everywhere whether it was when we were driving in that night or the following morning when we were riding to the race.

During the caravan procession of riders, team vehicles, and support vehicles the following morning, we rode on this long bridge across the lake which had hordes of people walking in the same direction we were riding. At first I wondered where they were all headed but quickly realized they were all headed to the start of the race. There were hundreds of people at the start and then even more around the race course. The opening ceremony was pretty neat. Something almost out of the "Hunger Games". There was a big sort of band performance with drums and metal clashing that sounded very stern and authoritative. When they weren't playing, they were playing the "Star Wars" sound track to go with everything. The ceremony was right on the water and they had these fire-hose, snake like contraptions supporting a person on top, seemingly flying around with water shooting out of the bottom of their shoes. There were a couple of them and they all were doing these crazy acrobatics, flipping and everything. Behind this was then a bunch of parasailers behind boats with flags, smoke, and more trailing off the back of them. The whole thing was quite the spectacle.

The race again started out fast with a lot of attacks and again I was in nearly every breakaway attempt and if I wasn't in it I made sure I got into a chase group that would make it to the leaders. Probably one of the coolest parts of the day's race was on the first lap. I bridged across to a sizeable break and everyone wasn't riding full gas so I stayed on the front drilling it for a long turn. The sweet part, other than going hard on the front with everyone in single file behind you, was that we were coming through the main part of the city and the relatively narrow road under the trees and between the buildings was packed with people. We were flying and I was going pretty hard so didn't really look at them directly but was just more aware that they were there. That was one of those times when you're going super hard and don't feel the pedals. I guess all the suffering during intervals by yourself sets you up well for when you don't feel the pain from the effort.

After about an hour or so a small break made it away without any GC threats so I could finally chill for a bit. Races are super easy when you just sit in. I guess it was a sort of rest day, minus going hard again into the finish. We finally all got together for a lead-out and were near and then on the front for a bit but still a bit far off from the finish. We lost a bit of positioning in one tight turn as well as lost contact with each other which was never reestablished

unfortunately. I tried to get back up to at least one of my teammates but it got super sketchy with a number of near crashes. The last thing I wanted to do in China is crash so I sat up and made sure I could stop in time if there was a crash in the sprint.

Sitting up though still placed me high enough for us to win the team classification on the day. However, we didn't know this so rode back to the hotel following the stage. We nearly got there, maybe five k away, and our team director came flying down the busy traffic filled street with the horn blaring. The thing with Chinese races and China in general is you have to abide by their rules and what they want and if you don't they really don't like it and fine you a lot. Especially with missing the sign in on the first day of the race, because they moved the start up a half-hour, we couldn't afford to miss the podium ceremony especially with how many people were there. We raced back through the city with the team car honking behind us while dodging cars, motos, and people, all who weren't following the stop lights, but I guess neither were we. After a couple close calls we made it back just before the ceremony start. It was pretty sweet with how many people were there. The craziest was when we left the podium tent as there were probably at least fifty people around one other teammate and myself trying to get autographs and photos. There are now a bunch of Chinese girls with my scribble of an autograph on whatever sport's team sweat-suits they were wearing. Now I know what it's like to be a famous actor or something. Sweet at first but then ridiculous.

*October 16, 2014*

*Race Day # 5 - Le Ping, Jindezhen*

After the first couple days of racing everything prior in the race starts to blend together a little bit from the racing itself to the hotels to the meals. When you first wake up in the morning you have to think which hotel you're at and remember the layout of the room to find the bathroom in the dark. Then you're immediately thinking about breakfast and try to remember what dinner was like and where it was the night before. Once you're more awake, it comes quick but when you're still half asleep you're like "where am I again?"

We expected the field to start to feel the effects of the racing but even if guys were they still raced fast and aggressive. I still felt pretty good but relaxed a bit more and didn't try to cover every move. The course was a descent one with a bit of rolling terrain in it along with a few U-turns, other turns, and some traffic furniture for a change. One break started to get a descent gap and two other GC threats were represented. My teammate, who was sitting in second overall (I was sitting in ninth, four seconds back) saw it right away and fortunately I was on his wheel. He jumped to go across and I went with him. We quickly made it across the gap on a small rise and immediately went to the front and drilled it. We were flying. The rest of the ten or so guys immediately started rolling through fast as well which gave us a descent sized gap

right away, apparently even with the yellow jersey's team going to the front right away to chase.

They got it to within twenty seconds but that's as close as they could get. On the last lap of the sixteen k circuit, almost half the guys in the break started sitting on, which met that much more work for those of us who wanted the gap to stick. There were only two other GC guys besides us in the break so we really wanted it to stick. Originally before the race while scouting the finish, I wanted to attack solo with just over a k to go and try for the win whether in a field sprint or out of a break. There was a good launching pad, a bit of a rise/false-flat into a bit of a downhill with a number of turns. The one Dutch guy who we had been following pretty well and who rides for a good Continental Team, attacked right where I wanted to. I was too far up in the rotation and hesitated because I needed to work in the group as well to keep the gap we had to the field behind. I thus went to the front and brought back the Dutch rider and kept our gap up as had I attacked, the group would have lost time to the group behind and we needed as much time as possible for the GC. I caught the rider at about 200 meters to go and tried to do a lead-out sprint but after over a k of going full gas, I was spent. My teammate was on my wheel, too far up, and two guys unfortunately came around him in the sprint. I was eighth or something but the effort put us back in the leader's jersey. I was then in fourth overall at four seconds back. Fifth on down was now twenty or more seconds back so we were sitting pretty well but we still have a lot of racing to go. There will be a lot of attacks to cover as our GC leader will only go with something if it's really dangerous which leaves me to cover anything else with anyone close on GC which is pretty much everyone because the gaps are still tight. I've been racing hard, now I'm going to have to race even harder. And not to jinx it but I'm sitting in an almost perfect position to take the overall as everyone more or less will be watching our leader's jersey leaving me with the potential opportunity to sneak into a break and take the overall. Lots of racing to come and guys will start to get tired. Hopefully my month of hiking in the mountains and kind of riding will keep me going strong. Historically as races go on, I get more tired but stronger. Well maybe not stronger per say but stay the same while everyone else gets more tired.